

Out of Christ.

In Christ.

With Christ.

Mat. 5. 22.

26. I sought to
goe to heaven by
my owne righte-
ousnes, Rom. 10. 3.

27. I sought my
selfe only, Phil. 2.
21. 2 Tim. 3. 5.

28. I was lost, Lu.
19. 10. 1 Pet. 2. 25.

29. I knew no-
thing, 1 Cor. 8. 2.
Rom. 3. 14.

30. My services
were abominable,
Prov. 15. 8.

31. I was like a
beast, Psal. 79. 22
& 45. 12.

32. My body
was the temple of
fin, Rom. 6. 19.

33. I did glory
in my shame, Phil.
3. 19.

34. I was like the
dirt & mire most
filthy, Isa. 57. 20.
and to 6. 11.

35. I sat in the ally
in the shadow of
death, Luke 1. 79.

4. 8. Job. 10. 28. 29.
I seeke to goe
to heaven without
my owne righte-
ousnesse, Phil. 3. 9.

I seek Gods glo-
ry chiefly, Phil. 1.
11. 1 Cor. 10. 31.

I am found, Luk.
15. 24.

I know in part,
1 Cor. 13. 12.

My services are
acceptable, 1 Pet.
2. 5.

I am like a prince
Gen. 23. 6. Rev. 1.
6.

My body is the
temple of the holy
spirit, 1 Cor. 6. 19.

I am ashamed
of my sin, Rom. 6.
21.

I am like the
most moon in beauty,
Cant. 6. 10.

I do sit virtu-
ously in the King
Throne eternally
in the shadow of life,
Eph. 2. 6.

Quary, Isa. 45. 17.
I shall bee in
heaven absolutely
righteous, Eph 5.
27. Jude v. 24.

I shall give it to
him wholly, Rev.
5. 12, 13.

I shall bee at
home, 1 Cor. 2.

I shall know e-
ven as also I am
known, 1 Cor. 12.

My services shall
be rewarded, Mat.
6. 4 & 10. 41.

I shall be like an
Angel, Luke 10.
36.

My body shall
be raised spiritual
1 Cor. 15. 44.

I shall be with-
out sin and shame
Heb. 9. 28.

I shall be like
the Sun in glory,
Mat. 10. 43.

I shall sit on his
Throne eternally
Mar. 10. 40. Revel.
3. 21.

The threefold state here thou mayest see,

What thou hast been, art, and wilt be:

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THE
SACRED METHOD
OF
Saving Humane Souls
BY
JESUS CHRIST.

By *Henry Hallywell* Minister
of the Gospel at *Ifeild* in *Sussex*.

1 Cor. II. vii

*But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery,
even the hidden wisdom which God
ordained before the World unto our Glory.*

L O N D O N,

Printed for *Walter Kettilby* at the *Bishop's*
Head in *S. Paul's Church-Yard*, 1677.





THE
PREFACE
TO THE
READER.

Reader,

THere are very few Books of
what quality soever, though
it be but an ordinary Pamphlet that
passes the Press, without some fair
bespeaking the Reader; wherefore
in conformity to the Custome, I am
to advertise Thee that the Design of
these following Papers is to shew
the excellency of the frame and con-
stitution of the Gospel, or that Sa-
cred Method by which God brings
Men to Heaven by his Son Jesus
A 2 Christ;

The Preface to the Reader.

Christ; which very thing to the considering and judicious, is a testimony sufficient of the Divinity of it, there being such abundant evidence of the choicest Attributes of the Deity, his Goodness, Wisdom and Power in the contexture of it. For when I consider who is the Author of the Evangelical Oeconomy, namely, the Blessed Son of God, that Eternal Logos, who has expressed such an Infinite Wisdom in the frame of Heaven and Earth, I cannot but think, that what is there so largely diffused and spread abroad, is, as it were, summ'd up and contracted into a living Image, and beautiful Representation in the frame of the Gospel. And certainly the Introduction of the Christian Religion, and the regenerating the World by it, being set off in the Scriptures by the glorious Appellative of Creation, and Jesus the Blessed Author and Finisher of it,
stiling

The Preface to the Reader.

*stiling himself the beginning of the Creation of God, i. e. of the E-
vangelical Dispensation, the spirit of God does clearly intimate to us, that the Goodness, Wisdome and Power of the Divinity, are more eminently and transcendently displayed in the Recovery of Mankind by the Gospel, than in their first Production. So that if it be a Piece of our Duty (as certainly it is) to think the most honourably and magnificently of the works of God's hands, it were a sinful debasing that sacred Project and Contrivance, which was laid before the Foundation of the World, to let our conceptions of it dwindle into some poor and trifling Design, and make such a pitiful Representation of it, as shall be unworthy that Eternal Wisdome, the Creatress of all things, to interest it self withal. For nothing is more sure, than that the Gospel is so contrived, as may most of all do honour*

Rev. 3.14.

The Preface to the Reader.

to God, and promote the welfare and happiness of Mankind. And upon this Ground and Foundation, I have built the following Discourse, which whoever will take the pains to peruse, I desire him to lay aside his Prejudices, and not to charge every thing that he shall find disagreeing with his present sentiments and persuasions, with the opprobrious and invidious term of Heresie : For by this means, it comes to pass, that Religion is made only to serve an Interest, and wait upon a Faction, and the grand Interest of Christianity is indeed hugely disserved by such oblique Arts and unwarrantable Insinuations. It shews Men indeed to be affected with a mighty Zeal, but it is that πικρὸς ζῆλος, that bitter zeal, which the Apostle tells us, is an effect of that wisdom that descends not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. But I am very incurious of the censures
of.

Jam. 3.14,

15.

The Preface to the Reader.

of angry and peevish Men, being secure in the sense of having endeavoured to do honour to God, by begetting in Men right Apprehensions of his Nature, and according to my mean Ability, promoted the Offices and Duties of a Virtuous life, by shewing the necessity of them, in order to our everlasting Happiness. And with this Advertisement, I remit the Reader to the Discourse it self. Farewell.



IMPRIMATUR

*Hic Liber (cui Titulus, The Sacred
Method of, &c.)*

GEO. HOOPER

21. Nov. Rmo Dno Arch. Cant.
1676. à Sac. Dom.





THE
SACRED METHOD
OF
Saving Humane Souls
BY
JESUS CHRIST.



HE Christian Religion is frequently called by Saint *Paul* a Mystery, wherein it is very probable he might allude to the Mysterious Rites of the Gentile Superstition, as the *Eleusynia*, or some such secret and mysterious Actions of the *Pagan* Religion. And in opposition to these, the Apostle declares to the World a higher Mystery, and teaches us that Christi-

Christianity in all respects exceeds the most sacred and venerable Actions of Paganisme. For although the Heathen *Mystagogi* pretended a high and noble design, and boasted the end of their Sacred Mysteries to be the leading and conducting the *Initiati* to the Presence and Fruition of the worshipped Deity, or in plainer terms, the everlasting Blessedness of Mens Immortal Souls (the sole privilege and prerogative of the Christian Mystery, the Gospel of the Son of God) yet they failed infinitely in the way and means of accomplishing this so excellent a purpose, the whole procedure being bottom'd upon an uncertain Foundation and doubtful evidence, and no better than an Histrionical Representation brought on by those delusive Spirits, who affected a Divine Honour, whereby instead of perfecting and bettering, they really vitiated and debauched the minds of Men, and made their most recondite and sacred Rites little better than practices of Filthiness and Uncleannefs. In which regard the Christian Oeconomy is justly stiled by the Apostle a *Mystery of Godliness*, whose end is not only the highest perfection of Humane Souls, but every where

1 Tim. 3.

16.

where in all its parts breathes the exactest holiness and purity of Body and Soul, as the only way to attain an Immortal Blessedness and Felicity.

By this Mystery then of the Gospel, we are not to understand a dark and intricate Riddle, contrived only to amuze and dazle the minds of Men, and which when explicated and unfolded, has no greater likelihood of benefiting the knower, than *Samson's* Riddle of feeding the *Philistines*: but we are to conceive by it a sacred and recondite Method of saving Humane Souls, that is, of purifying their minds to such degrees and measures, as may render them capable of an entrance into the highest Heavens.

Great is the Mystery of Godliness, i.e. the Way and Method of saving Mankind by the Gospel, is indeed wonderful and admirable. For the sacred plot of the Gospel was not then framed or laid, when it was promulgated and manifested to the World, but lay hid in the bosome of an Infinite Understanding, from ages and generations, and is expressly called by the same Apostle, the mysterious and recondite wisdom of God, which he ordained before

Col. i. 26.

1 Cor. 2. 7. *before the World*, whose projection and contrivance was from the out-goings of Eternity. So that in this Affair of the Gospel, we are not to look for any thing mean, low and shallow, but for something which may be worthy of God, an *οἰκονομία θεοπρεπῆς*, a design which may evidently and clearly display the highest Perfections of God its Author.

For the better illustration of which, we may consider, that in the contrivance, conduct and management of the Gospel, there is a clear and manifest demonstration of the Infinite Goodness, Wisdom and Power of God.

I. A manifestation of Infinite Goodness.

The Heavens and the Earth, and all the capacities of Immense space, declare an Infinite Goodness, but the clearest and most sensible demonstration of it, is in this *Mystery of the Gospel*, wherein that boundless love which has dispersed it self through all the orders and degrees of life, shines forth with a full and perfect lustre and glory. Here it is that we behold that Love, which liberally fills and sustains all things, more powerfully exerting its Blessed Nature, in cement-
ing

ing the Ruines, and rearing up the Foundations of a new World; for as in the first Creation, an Eternal and Energetical love diffused it self in the Production of whatever was made, so the same Goodness moves, as it were, a second time in the stupendous renovation of lapsed Souls, in the Evangelical Mystery and Oeconomy.

Which Truth may yet receive a further Evidence by these Gradations.

1. The more perfect any life is, the more it desires to diffuse and communicate it self. *God is love*, says St. John, 1 Joh. 4. 8. and he is the highest and most perfect life; now love is the most diffusive and communicative Principle in all the World, and the firmer any being is radicated in love, the nearer approaches it makes to that most excellent life and nature of God, whose beneficence and kindness the whole Creation tastes of. Self-love, or the love of the Carcass, the Bodily life restrains and contracts the free Exertions of the Mind, and therefore the Apostle sets it as a note of degeneracy, narrowness and anxiety, when Men shall be lovers of themselves and corporeal pleasures, in opposition

φίλωνται
& φιλήσου-
σι.

2 Tim. 3.

2, 4.

to that Universal and Intellectual love, which is the great Law of Rational Beings, and by which our Minds are made wide as the World, and carried forth in Benignity and Kindness to all the Creatures, as they more or less partake of the Divine Life and Nature. God is infinite Goodness, and all the Creatures are but the issues and emanations of his exuberant Fecundity and Life, and do more intimately depend upon him, than Faculties and Actions upon the Principles from whence they flow. It was not necessity or need, nor any greedy and thirsty desire of receiving praise and glory from them, that was the cause of the production of Men and Angels, but only the Fulness of God's own Goodness, which alone moved him to that chearful Approbation of the Works of his Hands, when he saw his own life diffused in such variety of Beings. And if we will do honour to God, and speak according to our own faculties, we may add life to this Demonstration, from the inward sense and experience of every good Man, who never finds a more inward joy and satisfaction of spirit, than when he is carried out in desires, and aspira-

aspirations of Benignity and Kindness towards the whole Creation. Nor does he look upon this, as any Argument of Righteousness, that he is at any time, in a more happy state and condition than others, for he could be willing that all the World were as happy as himself, did he not see strong and evident Reasons in the wise Administration of Providence, why it should not be so. Something of this excellent Temper, we find in those passionate Eruptions of Spirit, recorded in the Scriptures of Holy men, who seem to be altogether transformed into love : *Blot me out of thy Book,* (says *Moses* :) and *I could be content to be accursed from Christ* (says *St. Paul*) *for my Brethrens sake* : Nay, I am verily perswaded, that he who is once thoroughly baptized into this spirit of Universal love, would be contented to be eternally separated from the Presence of God, so that he might be without sin, if by that means the whole Intellectual Creation might be made happy. Now if we can reason any thing of God from those Perfections we find in our selves, we must needs conclude the highest and most perfect life to be most diffusive and

and communicative of it self.

2. Goodness is so much the more excellent, as the Objects are more noble, about which it is conversant. All things feel the effects of Divine Goodness, according to their different Measures and Proportions, and by how much the Rational life hath more objective reality than the sensitive, by so much are the Emanations of Goodness of more worth and excellency communicated to the one, than those diffused upon the other. As a Man is a more noble Creature than a Brute, so is the Goodness concerned with him, higher and of greater value, than that exercised upon a Beast. God is the Father of Spirits, and for that very Reason will not be implacable and irreconcilable to His own dear offspring, but though he chastise and scourge them for their bold and audacious revolt from his blessed Nature, yet will not cast off for ever, but in his severest corrections remembers mercy. Hence is that Prophetical Speech of the end of Christ's Death, that it should be for the gathering together the *scattered Sons of God*: though the Souls of Men had voluntarily forsaken God, and travelled
into

Joh. 11. 52.

into a strange Land, though their Iniquities had scattered them into far distant places from their own Home, yet an everlasting Goodness followed them still, and carefully sought the Reduction of those disobedient Sons of God, who had divided and separated themselves from him.

3. By how much the more fatal, desperate and universal the evil is, by so much the more glorious is the Goodness employed in the recovery of the Creature from it. Sin and wickedness is the misery, not of a part only, but of the whole Race of Mankind; and this their Degeneracy became so fatal, that it brought Darkness and Death it self upon all their better Faculties, and placed them in an utter Incapacity for ever of recovering themselves by their own solitary power and effort, into that state of immortality and life, which sin had deprived them of. — *Death passed upon all men, (says St. Paul) for that [or forasmuch as] all have sinned.* So that all Mankind, by their fall from God, were under the Reign, Dominion and Power of sin and death, and out of this thralldome and captivity, no Man could
 B extricate

extricate and deliver himself, whereby their condition became very deplorable and desperate. But Divine Goodness, that it might shew it self more conspicuously and gloriously to the World, has brought on a more chearful scene of things under the Gospel, rescuing Men from the Power of sin and death, and delivering them from the Tyranny of the Devil, through the meritorious Death and passion of Jesus Christ, who by his Glorious Resurrection hath fully declared himself a Powerful Conqueror of all his Enemies, assuring Mankind of their re-enjoyment of Immortality, and redeeming them from their Captivity under the Empire of Sin and Death, and translating them into the peaceful Kingdome of Life and Righteousness. Now as the desperateness of the Disease magnifies the skill of the Physician, so the fatal and universal Degeneracy of the Sons of Men, commends the transcendent love of God in their Recovery and Redemption. Greater love than this can no Man show, than to lay down his Life for his Friend, but herein has God commended his love to us, in that while we were Enemies to God and righteousness,

ness, and strangers to his life, Christ dyed for us. Such is that Testimony and Witness, which our Saviour bears to Divine Love and Goodness; every word of which is strangely emphatical: So [in such a wonderful and transcendent manner] God [the great Lord of all Beings, who stands not in need of any of his Creatures, but is Infinite Fulness and Happiness to Himself] loved [first and without any Motive or Occasion of this love given from us; *herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us*] the World [not only the particular Nation of the Jews, with whom formerly he entred into Covenant, but the whole Race of Mankind, Christ becoming a Propitiation for our sins (says the Apostle, the best Interpreter of himself, 1 Joh. 2. 2.) and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole World] that he gave [delivered unto Death freely, and that upon no other Motive or Invitation, but that of his own Eternal Goodness and Love] his only begotten Son [not a Servant, or an Angel, not an adopted, but his own Natural Son, that Son who is one with himself, and in whom he is well pleased, as the obedience of Abra-

Joh. 3. 16.]

1 Joh. 4. 10.]

Gen. 22.12

ham was more grateful to God, when *he with-held not his Son, his only Son from him.*] The whole Gospel is a Design and Contrivance of Infinite Love and Goodness; a palpable Pledge and Assurance of which, was, the sending of Jesus Christ from Heaven: *He that spared not his own Son*, says the Apostle; as if he had said, The delivering up of our Lord Jesus Christ, to be an Expiatory Sacrifice for the sins of Men, is so high a Demonstration of Infinite Love, that it begets in us a confident Assurance and full perswasion, that the same goodness will not fail of bestowing upon us, whatever may possibly contribute to our everlasting Happiness, as far as our Natures are capable of.

The summe of all is this, that to Infinite Goodness we owe not only the Production, but the continual Preservation of our Beings, not only the freeing us from a certain Misery, and a just and deserved Punishment, but the receiving us into grace and favour, and investing us with a Happiness much bigger than our hopes and expectations, even the Eternal enjoyment of Himself in Heaven. And that this should be wrought

wrought and effected by Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, who left the Sacred Mansions of Heaven, and veiled his Glory under a cloud of Flesh and Blood, and while he lived upon Earth, endured the contradictions of sinners, the bitter reproaches of vile and ungodly Men, and at last suffered an Ignominious and accursed Death upon the Cross, What is it but an everlasting Monument of Divine Goodness? such a high Demonstration of Infinite Love, as may well make us cry out with wonder and amazement, *Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us!*

2. Secondly, in the Frame and Mystery of the Gospel, there is a clear Demonstration of Infinite Wisdom. *To them who are called* (says the Apostle) *Christ the Power and the Wisdom of God:* i. e. Though the preaching of the Gospel were a stumbling block to the *Jews*, and accounted but foolishness by the *Greeks*, the one expecting their *Messiah* to be an earthly Prince, and dreaming of nothing but worldly Felicity, and the other counting it not worth the hearing, because not agreeing with the Principles

1 Cor. i. 24

of that vain Philosophy they had addicted themselves to; yet to those who were docible, tractable and obedient, there appeared an Infinite Wisdome, and an Eternal Understanding: they could not look into it, but they beheld (as the
 1 Cor. 2. 7. same Apostle speaks) *the mysterious and recondite wisdome of God, which he ordained before the World*, that is, whose sacred plot and contrivance was not then framed or laid, when it was first promulgated and manifested to the World, but lay hid in the bosome of an Infinite Understanding from all Eternity. 'Tis true, the loveliness and glory of this great Wisdome appears not so evidently to all, partly from their own carelesness and negligence, in not arriving to that measure and degree of Holiness, which may fit and qualifie them for a clear discerning of it: Hence the
 1 Cor. 2. 6. Apostle says, that *he speaks wisdome among them that are perfect*, such as were well grown in the practice of the Offices and Duties of Christianity; such as had *senses exercised to discern good and evil*, Heb. 5. 14. and partly, through the great Corruption, Depravity and Degeneracy of the minds of others, which
 put

put them into an utter Incapacity and Impossibility (while they remain such) of understanding Divine and Heavenly Truths; for *the natural* [animal or sensual] *man receives not the things of the* 1 Cor. 2. 14 *spirit of God.* But where these Impediments are removed, and the spirits of Men aptly disposed for the Reception of so great a Blessing, such Persons behold with enravishment and joy the exact strokes and perfect lineaments of an Eternal Wisdome.

Which Wisdome appears,

1. In the Admirableness of the Contrivance of the Gospel. Christianity carries with it such evident Proofs of an Incomprehensible Wisdome, that those sagacious Creatures, the Angels, imploy themselves in searching into it: And surely it must needs be an admirable piece of Wisdome, and a wonderful Contrivance, that must draw those Blessed Creatures *to look into it.* 1 Pet. 1. 12

Now the Wonderfulness and Admirableness of the Evangelical Plot and Contrivance, for the Salvation of Humane Souls, shews it self,

1. In finding out a way, whereby God might demonstrate, both his just

and implacable hatred of sin, and his exuberant Love and Goodness in saving Men. Sin is no part of God's Creation, nor any thing of the true Nature of the Soul, but an extraneous and adventitious Being, brought first into the World by the Devil, the great Enemy of Mankind. It is the Destruction and Ruine of the Workmanship of God's own hands, and being so infinitely contrary to his Sacred Life and Nature, it is no wonder, if he bear an irreconcilable hatred against it; and seek by all means, the driving it quite out of the World. But although God, by reason of the Infinite Purity and Holiness of his Nature, could not look with any favourable eye upon sin, yet his Almighty Love pitied his Creatures, and *his bowels yerned over them*, being, as it were, grieved and troubled at the heart, that they should be miserable for ever. Wherefore, God, through his Eternal Wisdome, resolved upon a course, which should both effectually extirpate and eradicate sin and evil out of the World, and yet reduce those strayed souls, which through it, had revolted from his blessed Life and Nature, to a participation of it again. And this he hath

Isai. 63. 15.

hath done, by sending his own Son into
 the World, to become an Expiatory Sa-
 crifice for the sins of all Mankind. For
 should God have cast Men off for ever,
 and thrown them into Hell, though he
 had still been Just and Righteous in his
 Actions, and declared but a high dislike
 of that, which his Essential Holiness
 could never patronize or countenance;
 yet his Goodness and Love
 had not so conspicuously
 and gloriously appeared. *
 On the other hand, should
 God have received the
 World into grace and fa-
 vour, forgiving their Ini-
 quities, without any pre-
 vious satisfaction for sin,
 though he might have done
 this, without any breach of
 the Eternal Purity and Ju-
 stice of his Nature, yet he
 had not so sensibly affected
 the minds of Men, with his
 just averfation of sin, nor so
 effectually discovered to them, his Anger
 and Displeasure against all evil and wick-
 edness. But now in the Death of Jesus
 Christ, God has reconciled Goodness
 and

** Sine hoc holocausto po-
 terat Deus tantum condo-
 nasse peccatum; sed faci-
 litas veniæ laxaret habenas
 peccatis effrenibus quæ eti-
 am Christi vix cohibent
 passioncs, quæ vix scelera-
 tos animos à voluptatum
 face avellunt. Cyprian. sive
 Author libri de Cardinal.
 Christi Oper. Serm. 14. Sic
 Zanch. lib. 2. de Incarnat.
 c. 3. q. 1. Etsi verò Deus
 servare nos poterat solo suo
 Imperio, peccata simplici-
 ter ex suâ misericordiâ
 condonando : noluit ta-
 men*

and Holiness, Justice and Mercy, punishing sin, and yet saving the sinner.

Behold therefore, and wonder at the Ineffable Goodness, and Transcendent love of God ! Could not Man redeem his Brother, and give unto God a Ransome for him ? No surely, for that Sacrifice, that is presented and offered up to God, must be without spot and blemish ; but when the Lord looked down from Heaven, upon the Children of Men, he beheld them all gone aside, and become filthy, so that there was not one that did good, no not one. But if this might not be, yet, could not God have declared his will to us by an Angel, by a Voice from Heaven, or by uniting himself to the Angelical Nature ? Certainly he might, but none of these ways could have been with such endearing circumstances, with such sensible Testimonies of dear Compassion and Benignity, as enravish ingenuous Minds into suitable Returns and expressions of love. Jesus Christ therefore, the Delights of his Father, the Brightness of his Glory, and the express Image and character of his Person, took flesh and dwelt among us. He that was *in the form of God,*
clothed

clothed with all the Majesty and Glory of the supramundane life, yet emptyed himself of all this unspeakable Felicity, *and took upon him the form of a Servant*, i. e. an Earthly, or a body of flesh and blood, in opposition to that state, which he before called, *the form of God*; and being found in that servile scheme, *he humbled himself, and became obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Cross*. What higher expressions of love, can Humane Understandings possibly conceive, than these? The endearing love of Friends could never give any greater evidence of it self, than that they lay down their lives one for another: but such was the transcendent love of Jesus, that he dyed for Rebels, for Apostates from that sacred life of God, to which alone the Sovereign Command and Rule both of Heaven and Earth, does of right belong. Behold him a Man of sorrows, exposed to the envy, hatred and malice of the cruel and unbelieving *Jews*, and yet, so inwardly affected with tenderness and commiseration towards them, that he omits nothing, which a Heart enflamed with love and compassion, could do to make them happy. And though God,

in

Phil. 2. 6,
7, 8.

μορφὴν θε-
λου.

μορφὴν θεῶ

in his Eternal Wisdome, foresaw the accursed Disposition of the *Jewish* Nation, who, as they had been heretofore thirsty after the blood of the Prophets and righteous Men, so now would never leave, till they had satiated their Revenge, in the Blood of his only begotten Son, yet he delivers him up into their hands: for, so the Apostle speaks, that *they had taken, and by wicked hands crucified and* *Act. 2. 23.* *slain* [ἐκδοτον] *him*, that was given out of the protecting hand and providence of God, to the will of his Enemies. A love which the Tongues of Men and Angels are never able sufficiently to express.

And as the Infinite love of God appears, in this way of saving Men by Christ Jesus, so his severity and hatred against sin, is no less manifest and conspicuous; for in that, *God spared not his own Son*, but delivered him up to Death, it is a sufficient proof and Argument of his utter Detestation of all sin and evil. No circumstance of his bitter Passion, but speaks forth the heavy wrath and indignation of God against sin. When he came into the Garden of *Gethsemane*, where began the first Scene of his Tragical

gical Passion, the Scripture tells us, that *he was sore amazed and very heavy*, and Mar. 14. 33
 this inward grief, and ineffable trouble of his soul, he expresses in that Passionate speech to his Disciples, *My Soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto Death*, not Mat. 26. 38
 only extensively, such as must last, till Death it self do end it, but likewise intensively, so great, as is usually at the very point of Death. And whence arose this sorrow? It was not out of any cowardly fear of pain and death, for knowing all things that should come upon him, yet with a firm constancy and sedate Resolution of mind, he comes to his implacable Enemies at *Jerusalem*; Luk. 9. 51.
 and when he was betrayed in the *Garden*, he willingly offers himself into their hands, *I am he*. Though certain it is, Joh. 18. 5.
 our Blessed Saviour, bearing about him our Humane Nature, was likewise subject to all the harmless Passions and affections of it, and was so far from that *Stoical* stubbornness and insensibility, that his Passive and tender Constitution filled him with grief, and yielded to the fear of pain and Death. Nor did his sorrow proceed from any displeasure of God against his Person; for he be-
 ing

ing perfectly obedient, and fully and exactly conformable to his Fathers will; it could not be, that he should groan under the anger and wrath of God. Nor was it altogether Bodily pains that made him so, but there was something extraordinary; As,

1. A withdrawing the sensibleness of Divine Assistance from him. As the Sun at our Saviour's Crucifixion, though not disjoyned from the World, yet for a time deserted the World, by withdrawing his light from it. And although this withholding the sensibleness of the Divine Presence, was done without any Aversion and dislike of the Person of our blessed Lord, which not only before, but at that very instant, was tenderly beloved of God, yet the Apprehension of it could not but make him bemoan his case, in that sad exclamation; *My God, my God, why [or how] hast thou forsaken me!*

2. Because, then all the Powers of Hell and darkness were let loose upon him. The Prince of Darkness, with his accursed Legions, did then (as we may reasonably suppose) appear to him, in the most affrighting and dreadful forms, and by the

the permission of Divine Providence, exerted and tryed the utmost of their Insulting Rage, in these their last and most furious Assaults; the Conquest and Victory over whom being to be atchieved, not by the Divine Power, but by the piety and Obedience of our Saviour, he falls into an Agony, and an Angel descends from Heaven, to strengthen and comfort his fainting Soul in these horrendous Conflicts.

3. Christ suffering for Men's sins, must needs have a distinct Apprehension of the manner, measure and odiousness of them, and beheld all this with a bleeding heart, forasmuch as he saw himself cast into those sad circumstances, bruised for the iniquities, and wounded for the transgressions of Mankind. All which put together were sufficient Causes of the highest grief and sorrow. Consider now, Jesus Christ, the eternally beloved Son of God, sorrowful and amazed, sweating drops of Blood in his Agony, bereaved of the sensibleness of Divine Assistance, conflicting with the utmost Rage and Insultation of the Devil, and dying a Painful and Ignominious Death upon the Cross, and it gives the highest Demon-

Demonstration of God's implacable Hatred against all sin, that possibly can be imagined.

2. The admirableness and wonderfulness of the Evangelical plot and contrivance, declares it self, in rendring this Way and Method effectual for the salvation of Men. That it should not be lost labour, or a work to no purpose, alarming the World with great hopes and expectations, and at last become abortive, or prove nothing but a windy birth, but that it should really attain the end, for which it was designed, that is, that men should receive benefit by it, and be eternally saved.

To this purpose three things are necessary ;

1. That what God requires, be in it self possible.

2. That Man be endued with a sufficient power.

3. That some allowance be made for our Infirmities.

1. First, I say, that the Commands of the Gospel be possible : For it were the most unreasonable and Tyrannical thing in the World, to exact that of another, which we know he is in no Possibility of per-

performing ; and therefore, being a thing so abhorrent and repugnant to the natural reason and equity of Mankind, it is at no hand to be attributed to God, whose very Nature is the most perfect and living Law of Justice. Wherefore, the Gospel being given to be the Religion of all Mankind, and for no other end, but their everlasting Benefit and Blessedness, we cannot but imagine all the duties and commands required of them, to be possible to be done ; for otherwise it would be so far from contributing to their advantage, that it would be but an Exprobration of their misery, and a Tyrannical and Arbitrari-ous Insultation over their calamitous condition. Nay, we are assured, that the laws of Righteousness required of us by the Gospel, are not only possible, but gracious and easie, and that from the mouth of the Blessed Author and giver of them ; *My yoke (says he) is easie,* Mat. 11. 28 *and my burden is light :* and the beloved Apostle has left it upon Record, that *the commands of God are not grievous,* that is, 1 Joh. 5. 3. *they are not insupportable burdens, too heavy for the nature of Man to bear, nor are they fetters and shackles of Iron,*

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contrived only to ensnare and make the Creation miserable, but such gracious Precepts and Constitutions, as are in themselves immutably good, and so infinitely agreeable to the true and proper, that is, the Intellectual Nature of Man, that he can no sooner understand his own happiness, but he would chuse them, if they had never been commanded. The Wisdome of God never interestes it self in unprofitable things, which surely this must have been, if the Observance and Practice of the Injunctions of the Gospel had been in it self impossible. Besides, supposing such intolerable and impracticable things imposed upon the reason of Mankind, it would subvert all future rewards and punishments. As for Rewards, there could be no such thing, for Rewards are only upon the consideration of Duty, and there can be no duty, where the commands are impossible: Nor can there be any equitable exaction of Punishment, because the Law it self is not feasible and practicable, and so the transgression becomes necessary and inevitable, and no more in the power of Men to help, than to hinder their being born into the World. Wherefore,
upon

upon the whole matter, unless the Gospel contain only such things as are possible, it is certain, no man can be accountable for them, unless we will suppose God such an Arbitrary Being, as acts by no other Law, than that of his own Will and Authority, which is all one, as for a Man to think to get himself a name of Power and Sovereignty, by going about all day, and treading upon a few poor Worms. And certainly it is all one to have no notion and apprehension of God at all, and to think so meanly of him, and so much below the excellency and dignity of his Blessed Nature and perfections.

But here it will be objected, that if the commands of the Gospel be not only possible, but easie and gracious, how comes it then, that Men are not presently made good, and all the World become true Christians?

To this, I have these things to reply.

1. That God forces none to be good, but having made us Rational Creatures, he has endued us with a free Principle. And without this, there would be no such thing as Moral Goodness upon Earth; for that which a man is compelled and

forced to, by the irresistible Determination of an exterior Principle, is neither good nor evil in reference to him, because it was not a true exertion of his will, but an act of something without him. And therefore should God irresistibly bend and incline the wills of Men to the Laws and Practice of Vertue, it would take away the distinction of good and evil, and Men would be what they are, by a fatal necessity, and not by choice. Moreover, should God forcibly make Men good, it would rather destroy, than recover the Nature of Mankind, and make them more imperfect Creatures, than they are already. It is the glory of our faith, that being tryed, it be found unto praise and honour; but what praise can be due to that, which is performed by the violent constraint of an uncontrollable Power? There would be little reason for the Scripture (says a worthy Prelate) so much to magnify the grace of faith, as being so great a Vertue, and so acceptable to God; if every one were necessitated to it, whether he would or no. 2. True Religion has a great disagreement with our present sinful Natures. Christianity came

*Princ. of
Nat. Rel.
lib. 1. c. 3.*

came into the World to curb our extravagant desires, to restrain the sinful and exorbitant affections of the Animal life, and to draw off our minds from the fading and enchanting Beauties of sense, to the living and Immortal forms of righteousness and truth. And it is no wonder if it be accounted troublesome and uneasie to a carnal mind, when its whole design is to let out the corrupt life and blood of the old man, and to renew men into that faultless nature, sin and wickedness had destroyed. Religion is not such a formidable and difficult thing, such an insuperable task in it self, but because 'tis an affliction to our natural life, to do violence to our lusts and bodily Passions, therefore sensual and hypocritical Persons judge it to be hard, troublesome and uneasie. But 3dly, Men generally distempered as they are, have no mind to set upon Religion in good earnest. They are for the most part in love with sin, and Vice is become customary and natural, and because 'tis some trouble to root out and extirpate an habitual corruption, therefore they fairly lay Religion by, as a thing too austere and unpleasant. So that there is not so much

difficulty in Religion, as in bringing men to entertain firm purposes and resolutions of embracing it, that is, of bettering their lives by it. Were but Men sincere in their endeavours after holiness, and the participation of the nature of God, the pretended roughness and asperity of Religion would quickly wear off, and they would see, that *its ways are ways of pleasantness, and all its paths peace.* By which it appears, that notwithstanding all the objections of our sensual and animal life, that it is possible, nay easie for us to become sincere Christians, and that the commands of God are so far from being Tyrannical and grievous, that they are the most agreeable to our Intellectual and Rational Natures.

2. It is necessary that Man be endued with a sufficient Power. For though the conditions of salvation be in themselves possible, yet if we be not put into a capacity, and endued with power from on high, sufficient for the performance of them, we are never the better. Though the walking of a Mile be a thing possible and feasible, yet it is impossible for him that has lost the use of his Legs. If
Christ,

Christ, when he cured the Impotent and Lame in the Gospel, by bidding them, *Rise up and walk*, had not at the same time confirmed and strengthened their feeble Limbs, his command had been utterly ineffectual. So although we, through our own fault, are fallen into a state of sin and misery, weakness and imperfection, yet if God intend to better our condition, and to recover us to our former life and health, he must confer upon us such a power, as may make his Design effectual. It is confessed, that all Mankind have utterly disabled themselves for the attainment of everlasting Blessedness, by their own naked and solitary endeavours; but God, out of his free goodness and love, making a new Covenant with the World, and propounding certain terms and conditions, upon which they may again be made happy, it is altogether repugnant with his Infinite Wisdom and Justice to require of Men the performance of these Conditions, without enduing them with a sufficient strength for that purpose. Should God offer life and salvation upon the terms of the Gospel, and yet never endue us with an ability to embrace and accept

of them, it would not be a design worthy of him, nor agreeable with those serious Professions and Desires of our Immortal Happiness.

Ezek. 33.
11.

For the fuller Illustration of this, we must know, that God hath always declared his delight in the Felicity, and his aversion of the misery and destruction of his Creatures, and lest we should question the reality of this his love, he has confirmed it with an Oath: *As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked.* And this fervent desire of the good and welfare of the World, moved him to enter into a Covenant with them in Christ Jesus. Now, as in all mutual compacts, and stipulations between parties, there are terms and conditions on both sides, and each Party obliges himself to the performance of something: So in this great Indenture or Covenant, which God has made with the World, he is graciously pleased to oblige himself to do something for us, and we are likewise tyed to the observation of certain Articles and conditions required on our part. And this notion of the Gospel seems to be intimated by the Apostle, *2 Tim. 2. 19.*

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The Foundation of God standeth sure, having this Seal, the Lord knows who are his. And let every one that names the Name of Christ, depart from iniquity.

Where, give me leave to insert, what a very learned Man observes, concerning the signification of the word *δεμέλιος*, which our Translation renders [foundation.]

‘ That the Hebrew word, to which it answers in the Rabbinical Dialect, is used for *Tabula contractus*, a Bill of contract, and so *δεμέλιος* here signifies, the Compact or Covenant of God; for the very mentioning of a Seal here, implyes a Bill of Contract: for Bills of Contract had their Seals appendant to them; each side whereof had his Motto, the one suiting with the one party contrahent, the other with the other. To this the Apostle here alludes, God’s *δεμέλιος*, says he, standeth sure, (that is, God’s Bill of Contract, or his Chirographum) having a Seal according to the manner; the one side whereof carries this Motto, *The Lord knows them that are his*, i. e. he will never fail to own those who continue faithful to him; the other this, *Let every man that names*
‘ the

Mr. Mede,

2 Cor. 5.
19.

' the name of Christ, depart from iniquity: which if he do not, he forfeits all the Priviledges, which he might otherwise hope for, from this Covenant of the Gospel. And this God's entring into a Covenant, is in other terms expressed, by being reconciled to the World, God was in Christ, reconciling the World unto himself, not so, as to take all Men immediately into Heaven, but so far as to put all Mankind, by the Gospel, into a capacity of salvation. To which end and purpose, amongst other χάρισματα, or Gratuitous Donations which God hath freely engaged himself to bestow, this is one very considerable, the giving of all men sufficient power and strength to enable them to perform his will and commands, so as he will accept of. Which very thing is made a part of God's holy Covenant, that he would grant unto us; i.e. that he would give us power, as the word is used, Revel. II. 3. or qualify us with a sufficient strength and ability, to serve him in holiness and righteousness, before him, all the days of our lives. For the further proof of this, I shall offer these two Arguments.

Luk. I. 74.

1. That it is necessary that God should
impower

impower all Men to whom the Gospel is preached, with a sufficient ability to perform what is required in it, that he may manifest his Intentions of saving all the World to be real. The Apostle tells us, that *God is the Saviour of all men*, and how he can be so, unless he put all Men, some way or other into a capacity of salvation, I profess my self not able to understand: Now what is it to put any one into a capacity of salvation, but to place him in that way, and to provide for him all those means which shall be necessary and effectual for the obtaining that glorious end? Hence the same Apostle informs us, that *God would have all men to be saved*, that is, as far as lyes in him, and may be consistent with the Nature of Rational Creatures, and that it may appear there is nothing wanting on God's part to make them happy. Wherefore those who deny to the greatest part of Mankind such a Participation of the assistance and grace of God, as may place them under a capacity of obtaining Heaven, seem to me to question the reality and sincerity of God's Design and Intention of saving all the World by Christ Jesus. For if the purpose

1 Tim. 4. 10

1 Tim. 2. 4

pose of God, in sending Jesus Christ into the World, was, that he should taste death for every man, and that the World through him might be saved, it was likewise undoubtedly a part of this purpose that they should all be qualified and empowered with such ability, the faithful actuating of which should certainly attain that end for which it was designed. And that God should intend the salvation of all Mankind, and promulgate this his Intention, and alarm the hopes and expectations of all the World, and yet deny them that, without which they cannot be saved, is utterly irreconcilable with those apprehensions, which we ought to have of the Divine Nature.

2. That all Men might thereby be accountable to God. No Man can be accountable for any more than he has received, and if there were any number of Men to whom the Gospel were faithfully preached, and the means of salvation made known, and yet were always left destitute of a power and ability of believing and acting, according to the prescriptions of it, they would be so far from being left without excuse, or having their mouths stopped, that their

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Apology would be as reasonable, as if God should expostulate with them for not creating the World, or raising the Dead. For if they never were so much as put into a capacity of believing, how can they be justly punished as Infidels? But because the righteous Governor of Heaven and Earth, cannot but do that which is just and equal, and that all men to whom God has communicated the Gospel, shall be accountable to him for it, therefore we are assured that all of them, at some time or other, were endued with such a measure and degree of God's powerful assistance, as should enable them to do what he required of them, and so as he would accept of. *This is the condemnation*, (says our Blessed Saviour, *Joh. 3. 19.*) not that all the World was in a state of Darkness, but that *Light*, that is, the Gospel, is come amongst them, and by It they are put into a capacity, not only of discovering, but of coming out of their sins, and *they loved darkness rather than light*, that is, preferred the satisfaction of their own corrupt lusts, before a sincere obedience to the will of God. And methinks, the Righteousness of God's Dispensation with

with Men in this kind is evidently prefigured, in that Parable of the Vineyard, *Isai. 5.* which is alike applicable to the state of things under the Gospel, as it was then to the *Jewish Church*: the planting it in a fruitful soil, the careful manuring and cultivation of it, implying all necessary means for the increase and growth of Men in grace and vertue, whereby might very well have been expected such Wine, as might chear and exhilarate the heart of God and man, but when, after all this pains, it brought forth nothing but wild Grapes, then God determines upon the just destruction of it, and for the Equity and Justice of this Procedure, appeals to the Consciences of Men, *What could have been done more that I have not done?*

But against this it is objected, that if all Men under the Gospel are put into a capacity of salvation, whence then comes the different entertainment of it, and Why is it that all Men are not effectually convinced and wrought upon by it?

For the solution of this difficulty, I shall return, 1. That of *Origen*, that to an effectual perswasion there is required
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not only that the Perswader offer such things as are apt to beget belief, but likewise a suitable disposition and tractable frame in him that is to be perswaded. So that the Reason why many Men do not entertain and believe the Gospel, is not that the Gospel is unfurnished of perswasory Arguments, or that God is wanting in any thing on his part, but because they reject and refuse those things which do in others, and might in them (if it were not for their own obstinacy) produce faith and belief. As (says the Father) the most eloquent O-
rator that ever spake may perswade in vain where he meets with a stubborn and refractory disposition. It is sufficient therefore that the Gospel suggests and offers *πιστευς λόγους* such rational Arguments and Motives as are proper to beget Belief in Moral Agents, but the *τὸ πείθεσθαι* perswasibility, or the Act of being perswaded is a work of Mens own. For proof of which the Father cites these Scriptures, *Gal. 5. 8. Perswasion cometh not of him that calleth you. And Isai. 1. 19, 20. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the Land: but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be de-*
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voured with the Sword. Which account Origen seems to have taken out of *Ire-*
lib.4.c.76, naus, Facere enim proprium est benigni-
tatis Dei, fieri autem proprium est ho-
minis Naturæ. Si igitur tradideris ei
quod est tuum, id est fidem in eum &
subjectionem, percipies ejus artem, & eris
perfectum opus Dei. Si autem non cre-
dideris ei, & fugeris manus ejus, erit
causa imperfectionis in te, qui non obedisti,
sed non in illo qui vocavit. 2. The Affi-
 stance and aid of the grace and spirit
 of God under the Gospel is not by Om-
 nipotency or Power at large, but such a
 concurrence as leaves to Men the liberty
 of their own wills, as is manifest from
 several places of the sacred Scriptures,
Joh. 5. 40. Ye will not come unto me that
ye may have life. Though our blessed
 Saviour spake as never Man spake, and
 wrought such Miracles as never Man did,
 beyond which nothing can be offered to
 make the Gospel credible, yet those con-
 tumacious *Jews* would not receive him.
 And of the Pharisees and Lawyers it is
 said, *Luk. 7. 30. That they rejected the*
counsel of God against themselves, that is,
 the merciful purpose or design of God
 towards them in making provision for
 their

their salvation, as well as the rest of the
 Jews.

3. It is necessary that some allowance be made for our infirmities. For though a mighty Power engage it self on our behalf, yet if God should be extreme to mark what is done amiss, if he should take advantage of every frailty and miscarriage, who then could be saved? Hence it is that our merciful God considering our frame, and remembering the imperfection of Humane Nature, is willing to abate and strike off much of our account upon that stock, and treats with us not according to the degrees of an Angel, but the measures of a Man, not after the highest rigor, but κατ' ἐπιείκην, according to equity which is the truest and most perfect Justice. For herein consists the excellency of the Gospel Covenant, in that under it 1. God allows of our Repentance for past sins. 2. Accepts of our sincerity for the time to come. It was part of that Commission which Christ gave his Apostles before his Ascension into Heaven, that they should Preach *repentance and remission of sins in his Name among all Nations*: which they faithfully observed, of-

Luk. 24.

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Act. 3. 19.

fering life and salvation to those that
 crucified the Son of God, provided they
 would repent of this their heinous crime
 and become new Creatures. *Repent and
 be converted, that your sins may be blotted
 out.* It is the great comfort the Chri-
 stian Religion brings guilty sinners, in
 that it assures them of the love of an
 offended God, that their past sinful lives
 shall not ruine or exclude them from his
 favour, but that now in this day of mer-
 cy and peace, if they will return unto
 him by a speedy Repentance, he will be
 merciful to their Unrighteousness, and
 will remember their iniquities no more.
 The Conscience of Mens own guilt makes
 them afraid, and like *Adam*, run from
 the Presence of God; wherefore to
 prevent those misgiving thoughts of the
 Nature of God, which Mens sinful hearts
 possessed them withall, and for the fu-
 ture to take away all jealousies and su-
 spicious fears out of their Minds, God
 is pleased to publish a Declaration of
 Pardon and Indulgence to all Penitent
 Persons, giving them all imaginable se-
 curity of his Propensity and readiness to
 be reconciled, and of his unfeigned de-
 sire and willingness to accept of their
 persons

Persons upon their serious and hearty detestation of their former sins and evil courses. And to the end that Men may be perfectly convinced that God is not inexorable and implacable, and that he consults not his own Glory in any other way than that of the Creatures good and advantage, he vouchsafes out of his undeserved favour and grace to accept of our *Sincerity* for the time to come; the knowledge of which is therefore imparted unto Men by the Gospel to settle their Minds and quiet their Consciences, which otherwise upon every failure in their Duty would perpetually torment them with the fear of God's everlasting Anger and Displeasure. By sincerity, I mean such a frame and constitution of spirit, whereby our whole Souls are faithfully carried out in obedience to the will of God, so far as it is made known to us. *These things I write* 1 Joh. 2.1. *unto you* (says the beloved Apostle) *that ye sin not*, that is, It is the design of the Gospel perfectly to abolish all sin, and therefore it requires Mens utmost caution and endeavour against it. But because Men may fall into sin through the improvidence and short-sightedness of

Humane Nature, or through the sudden incursion of a Temptation, and the Violence and importunity of it; yet let them not cast away their confidence, nor sink under their load and dye, for *if any man thus sin, we have an Advocate with the Father*, a royal Agent at the right hand of God, who makes intercession for us, not as in the days of his flesh by offering up Prayers with strong crying and tears, but by Virtue of that Power and Authority of ruling his Church according to his own Pleasure, dispensing his favours and saving Men by the mercies and compassions of the Gospel, which Prerogative he purchased and merited for himself by his bitter Death and Passion. For God does not exact of us a perfect, unfinning Obedience, so as never to fail in our duty, or offend in the least tittle or circumstance, but he requires of us a perfection of sincerity, the not giving way to any known sin, or doing that upon deliberation, which a Man's conscience tells him is a breach and violation of the Law of God, though there be never so great Temptations to it. This is that which the Scripture calls by the Names of the *New Man* and the *New*
Crea-

Creature, when we love and serve God with our whole hearts, and retain such a clear sense of the deformity of sin, and the loveliness of Virtue, as makes us studiously prosecute the one, and detest and abhor the other. And though this sincerity of heart may be accompanied with meekness and imperfection, yet it is such as God has graciously promised to accept of, and to wash away those lesser frailties and infirmities in the Blood of Christ. This state of mind is an everlasting Fountain of Peace and Joy, a spring of Eternal contentment and satisfaction. It supports us in all dangers, carries us undauntedly through all difficulties, and fills our souls with an enravishing calmness and tranquillity. It is certainly the best Companion and the surest Friend in all the World: for when the Clouds gather and a storm arises, and the face of things in this lower Region becomes troubled and confused, yet our sincerity never leaves us, but in the most formidable and dismal appearance of Nature puts on a chearful countenance, and looks abroad and meets the greatest dangers with a high and generous resolution, being confident of this, that that

everlasting goodness which folds the whole Creation in tender Arms, will never disdain or cast away a sincere Person, nor despise him who unfeignedly and bewailing his weakness prosecutes that which is simply and absolutely the best.

2. A second thing wherein the Excellency of Divine Wisdom appears, lyes in the manner of the manifestation of the Gospel to us. *God was manifest in the flesh*, says St. Paul, that is, the wonderfulness of the mystery of the Gospel consisted in this, that God took upon him our flesh and blood. God communicated his will to us by sending down his *Son in the likeness of sinful flesh*, (Rom. 8. 3.) that is, in a body of flesh and blood. I shall not here insist upon those *πολυμερῶς καὶ πολυτρόποις*, those various ways and divers manners by which God spake to the Fathers of old, communicating his will to them sometimes by Dreams and Visions, by a Voice from Heaven and the Apparitions of Angels, but consider that way which God hath chosen of manifesting himself to the World in these last days by his Son, which as it best sutes with the Evangelical

gelical Dispensation, so it discovers to us that *manifold wisdom* the Apostle speaks of, *Eph. 3. 10.* a Wisdom that displays it self in several ways and manners, and yet all tending to one great end and purpose, namely the recovery of Men from sin to a state of Purity and Holiness. For in this great design of instructing the World by the Incarnation of our blessed Saviour, we discover the evident Traces and Footsteps,

1. Of a condescending Wisdom accommodating things to our Apprehensions and Capacities. The delivery of the Law on Mount *Sinai* was usher'd in with a terrible and amazing solemnity, the Mountain quaking and vomiting out pitchy Clouds of smoke and globes of Flame, a fiery Tempest or Whirlwind roaring with formidable peals and claps of Thunder, together with the prodigious sound of a Trumpet rending and tearing the Heavens, so that *Moses* himself exceedingly fear'd and trembled. But the Gospel being wholly a design of Mercy and Love carries with it no terrors and affrightments; but is composed of the kind invitations of Peace and

comfort, the Mount *Sion* wherein the resplendent glory of the first-born is displayed, shining only with the gentle beams of an attractive and pleasing light, and Jesus the blessed Mediator of this New Covenant with his extended Arms proclames his willingness to embrace and receive the World which he has reconciled to God with his own blood. This is that Oeconomy which the Apostle *Cor. i. 21* calls *the foolishness of preaching*, not as if it were so in it self, but because 'tis a way of condescending wisdom, wherein God stoops down to our apprehensions, and frames things so as we may understand them, and receive an infinite benefit by them. For Man, partly from the frame and constitution of his Nature consisting of Body as well as Soul, but much more from his fall and descent into this lower life becomes wonderfully affected with gross Phantasms and Exterior Representations. Whence it comes to pass that we do more easily and frequently conceive of things as they appear to sense than as they are in themselves, when apprehended by a more discerning Principle. Wherefore the Infinite Wisdom of God that makes not
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its Operations in a way of Absolute sovereignty and immensity of Power, forcing the Creatures against those inbred Principles she hath placed in them, but sweetly and powerfully directs them in a steady way of congruity and proportionateness to the natures of things, being to work out Man from this low contracted state, the sad Region of sin and Death, to a participation of Immortality and more free emanations of Divine life, contrived a way most suitable and agreeable to the shallow capacities and faculties of Humane Souls. God would not appear to us in a flame of fire, nor speak by an Angel in a body of pure Air, but in the *Form of a Servant* clothed with our Humane Flesh, and subject to all the harmless Passions of our Nature, that he might more kindly disengage us from the cruel Tyranny of sin and Satan. For let us but consult with our own Reasons, whether this be not a greater Incitation and more powerful inducement to Men to believe and obey the Declarations of the Divine Will, to exhibit to them some extraordinary and remarkable Person that should by the fullest demonstrations and sensible signs prove himself to be
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Exod. 20.
19.

the Eternal Son of God, and by sweetly compulsive Motives even to the suffering a barbarous and shameful Death attract Humane Minds to the Imitation of his Virtues and following his steps, than that God should by any of those forementioned ways manifest himself in effects of Benignity or Displeasure. The whole Nation of the Jews discover the sense of Mankind in such a case, when being affrighted with the terrors accompanying the descent of God upon the Mount, they said unto Moses, *Speak thou with us and we will hear, but let not God speak with us lest we dye.* For,

1. Considering the world partly from themselves, and partly from the cunning of Satan, so much addicted and given over to the belief of sense, had not Christ visibly appeared and conversed with Men, the Gospel could never have captivated Humane Understandings with such irresistible evidence, or wrought in them such a full perswasion of the things it taught, as we see it hath done. Should the great Pillars of the Christian Faith, I mean the Apostles and Disciples of the Holy Jesus have laid its first ground-work upon the hearing of some voice,

voice, or perswaded their Auditors (as *Numa Pompilius* and some other Hea-then Law-givers) from the converse they had with some Angel, that their Doctrine was ~~from God~~ delivered to them from Heaven, and had God for its Author, yet how hardly would Men have embraced it upon these accounts, especially considering those imminent and apparent Dangers they were likely to incur upon the profession of it. How ill resented is that great Doctrine of our Blessed Saviour *Self-denial* and *Resignation* among vulgar Spirits, and how difficult a thing is it to bring off degenerated Hearts from the Interests of the World? and is it likely then that Men should be so prodigal of their dearest Blood, as to sacrifice it to an uncertain Rumour and Report, which every Impostor is able to pretend? But to see the meek Lamb of God made in our own likeness, having left the sacred Mansions of Light and Glory, and clothed himself with our frail Mortality, to behold him (I say) testifying by many Miracles and irrefragable Arguments through the whole course of his abode on Earth, and at last taking it upon his Death, that

that he was the Son of the ever-living God, and came down from Heaven to make known to Men that God was reconciled to the World through him, this must needs strike our Imaginations more forcibly than whatever else the wit of Man could possibly conceive.

2. The Gospel was intended to transform and work our Natures into that which is the flower and perfection of the Divine life, that is an universal love: to call off our minds from those little Interests they are apt to espouse by looking upon themselves as so many particular Beings divided and separated from the rest of the World, and created only for themselves and their Private concerns, and to beget in them an universally extensive charity by widening their Capacities to the Dimensions of the whole Creation. By which we are taught not to think it enough that our love ascend in copious flames to Heaven, unless it likewise descend in due measures and degrees upon all Mankind. And indeed it is impossible for a Man that is thoroughly baptized into this spirit of Universal love, to have any self designs in

in opposition to the general good of the whole World, but he must needs be infinitely desirous and pleased to see the life and nature of God communicated to all Beings capable of receiving of it. And this love is so strong and vigorous that it firmly unites it self to all in whom it finds any true likeness and resemblance of the Divine Image, and so far endears them to it self, as to constrain us *to lay down our lives for the Brethren.* But certainly this Flame could never have burnt so bright if it had not been raised and quickned by that sensible demonstration of inimitable affection in the Death of the Holy Jesus. For what greater encouragement could there be to oblige and unite Mens souls to one another, than that their love should first be kindled from Heaven by that great and unparallel'd Exemplar of noble Charity, who laid down his life to expiate the crimes of his own and his Fathers Enemies?

1 Joh. 3. 16

2. Of a congruity and compli-
ance with the state and condition of Mankind
both in respect

of { 1. Moral } Evils.
 { 2. Natural }

First,

First, in respect of Moral Evils: The degeneracy and fall of Mankind from God made them Slaves and Vassals to sin and Satan; for the busie Tempter being not able to work upon them by external force and violence, drew their wills into consent by craft and specious solicitations, till at last he had so far enlarged his Kingdom, as to bring the whole Race of Mankind under his Dominion. Wherefore the Gospel being designed to free Men from that unnatural Bondage, and to restore them to their true liberty, it does in all points confront the ways and methods by which their Captivity was compassed and effected. It had been a small matter by a high hand, and by an Infinite Power at large to have destroyed the Devils Kingdom, but herein appeared an excellent Wisdome, so to lay the Ground and Foundation of this glorious purpose of the salvation of the World, that the Politick Prince of Darkness might be taken in his own craftiness, and lose this his Empire and Dominion by the same methods by which he at first obtained it. The Woman being first in the Transgression, and bringing sin and Death upon all her Off-spring, that Di-
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vine Wildome that draws light out of darkness, and Order out of Confusion, decreed that *the seed of the Woman should break the Serpent's head*, that is, that Gen. 3. 15 Christ who is the Seed of the Woman, κατὰ φύσιν, by Nature and his Members, who are so κατ' ἐπέκτασιν by spiritual engraftment into him, should dispossess the Devil of that Power, Sovereignty and Principality which he holds over the World by sin. According to this early Declaration of Men's Recovery, Jesus Christ the true Seed of the Woman comes into the World, and by walking exactly contrary to his Enemy, restores to the World what they lost by the first Adam. And whereas the Devil managed his Kingdom of sin and Death with all imaginable Tyranny and Insultation over poor Mortals, our Blessed Jesus was so far from requiring Humane Blood to be sacrificed to him, that out of a deep sense of our Calamity he parted with his own Blood for the life of the World. A more effectual and agreeable course could never have been taken than this, that the Captain of our salvation should visibly appear and conquer the Kingdom and Powers of Darkness in that Nature

ture which the first *Adam* ruin'd and destroyed.

Secondly, in respect of Natural Evils : Though it be no disgrace nor shame to be made a Man, yet he that deeply reflects upon Humane life, shall find it at the best very calamitous and standing in need of much Pity and Compassion. We are born into the World helpless and weak, and as if we did presage our own future miseries, the first actions of our life are spent in crying and tears : Our very Bodies are a sad load and burden upon our Spirits, inclining them to many foolish lusts and passions, subject to many Pains, Diseases and Death, insomuch that many good and holy Men have in passionate streins bewailed their stay and continuance here on Earth, *Woe is me that I sojourn in Mesek, and have my habitation in the Tents of Kedar ! and, O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of Death !* Now none can so affectionately pity, nor so intimately resent the distress of another, as he that hath smarted and suffered under the same calamity : Therefore says the Apostle, *We have not an High-Priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of*
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our infirmities, by reason of the great distance, disproportion and sublimity of his Nature, *but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin*, that is, manifested and declared himself to be a true Man, by being subject to all the harmless affections and infirmities of humane flesh and blood; forasmuch therefore as he became our Brother, by taking upon him the same Natural condition, he must needs be thoroughly apprehensive and sensible of our state, and so the more apt to sympathize with and commiserate poor Mortals, and by that powerful sovereignty to which he is exalted, act for us and send down relief from Heaven to us. For though the Infinite Essence of God pervade the whole World and all the Creatures live within it, and therefore must needs feel and know the inmost Energies, Motions and stillest Actings of all Beings; yet it affords not such a sensible comfort to Humane minds, as to behold the Son of God taking upon him our Nature, and by that Union and proximity assuring us of his Tenderness and Compassion towards us. For *he took not on him the nature of Angels*, being unwilling to be so far removed from us,

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Heb. 2. 16,
17, 18.

but took on him the Seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful High-Priest—— for in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

3. A third thing, which demonstrates the excellency of Divine Wisdom in the dispensation of the Gospel, consists in the fitness and suitableness of it to the end for which it was designed. For things are so much the more excellent, by how much the congruity and fitness is greater for the accomplishing their end and purpose. Now the great intent and design of God in the Gospel being (as I have said) the everlasting blessedness of Humane Souls, the more congruously and fitly disposed it shall be found to be for the obtaining this effect, the greater is the glory of the Divine Wisdom interressing and concerning it self about it. This aptness and suitableness is seen,

1. In that the Gospel is furnished with all those Arguments that are requisite to approve it self worthy of Belief to all Rational Persons. To this two things are necessary.

1. The

1. The attestation of God himself.

2. Rational evidence and conviction:

For whatever is attested of God, and hath his Seal affixed to it, is by the general consent of all Men to be looked upon and entertained as infallibly true: Veracity being an Essential Attribute and perfection of the Divine Nature. St. Paul discoursing of the mystery of Godliness tells us that Christ and Christianity was *justified by the spirit*, i. e. owned, approved and recommended to the World by the spirit of God. And this God's commendation of our blessed Saviour to the World, as a Person commissioned and invested with full Authority to declare his will unto Mankind, was done at several Times and in divers manners.

1. At the Baptism of our Saviour, *Mat. 3. 16, 17.* when the Heavens were opened, and the spirit of God descended upon him, and a Voice from Heaven proclaiming him *the beloved Son of God in whom he was well pleased.* And this manner of Divine Revelation by a Voice from Heaven, as it was the most ancient, so the most honourable way of God's communicating his will to Mankind,

Gen. 22. 17.

*Exod. 20. 22. Ye have seen that I have
 Vi. Dent. talked with you from Heaven. For what
 4. 33. 36. the Jews relate of the Bath-kol, are for
 the most part fabulous, or else Magical
 and Satanical Delusions. Certain it is
 Dr. Light- (as a very learned Author observes)
 foot. there is not the least mention in the Ho-
 ly Scriptures of a Voice speaking from
 Heaven, between the giving of the Law
 and the Baptism of our Saviour. And
 it were very strange if God withdraw-
 ing those ordinary ways of revealing
 his Will under the second Temple, should
 yet continue the most noble of all, by
 speaking to Men from Heaven. And
 that we may not think there was any
 plot or combination between John the
 Baptist and our Saviour Christ, it is said,
 Joh. 1. 33. that John knew him not, but had
 this sign given him, that upon whom he
 should see the Spirit descending and re-
 maining on him, that same was the true
 Messias and Saviour of the World. And
 to this Voice our Lord himself appeals,
 Joh. 6. 27. Him hath God the Father seal-
 ed, i. e. visibly approved and owned
 Christ from Heaven, to the end that he
 having this wonderful attestation of God
 himself might be believed on in the
 World,*

world, and his Doctrine as unquestionably received as the Letters of a King, when his Seal is affixed to them.

2. Another confirmation of Christ and his Doctrine was at his Transfiguration. *Mat. 17. 5. A Voice comes out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him.* And this St. Peter brings as a Demonstration of the Truth of the Gospel, *For we have not followed cunningly devised Fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, q. d. We have not imposed upon the Minds and Spirits of Men, as the manner of cheaters and deceivers is, but have delivered to you such things as we have seen and heard, being eyewitnesses of his Majesty; For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a Voice to him from the excellent Glory, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased: And this Voice which came from Heaven we heard, when we were with him in the Holy Mount.* 2 Pet. 1. 16, 17.

3. God approved our Lord Jesus by enabling him to work Miracles, which is such a clear Testimony of the Divine

Mission of our Saviour, that both *Jews* and *Gentiles* ought to be convinced by it. To the *Jews* it ought to be Convictive from their own Law, *Dent. 18.22.* *When a Prophet speaks in the Name of the Lord, if the thing follow not nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken——* Which Rule was given them to discern true prophets from false; for if the Prophet brought to them a New Doctrine, and confirmed it by supernatural and miraculous Operations, though he commanded them something contrary to the Law, yet if he perswaded nothing but the worship of the One true God of *Israel*, they ought to obey him, forasmuch as there could be no greater Evidence of the Divine Testimony and Approbation, than by enabling such a Man to work Miracles. And though this General Rule might be applied to all the *Jewish* Prophets, yet did it more particularly respect the coming of the *Messias*, there being none more conspicuous and illustrious for all those signs by which God would have the prophet that speaks in his Name to be known than *Jesus Christ*. Nor is it of less moment and argument to the *Gentiles*,

titles, for Miracles being such unquestionable evidences of the Interposition of a Divine Power, it follows that whoever shall lead a sincere and unblameable life, and teach nothing but the worship of the true God and the conscientious practice of Virtue, and for the confirmation of this his Doctrine shall work Miracles, we ought to believe him sent from God. This was it which convinced Nicodemus, *We know that thou art a Teacher come from God, for no man can do these Miracles that thou doest except God be with him.* He saw that Jesus Christ professed and commanded only the worship of the true God, and that he exhorted only to the practice of real Righteousness and Holiness, and therefore that those great Miracles which he wrought exceeding the power of evil spirits, were a sensible Demonstration that he was sent from God.

Joh. 3. 2.

It may now not improperly be inquired, *Whether Miracles are always necessary to beget belief of the Divine Authority of a Doctrine: and how far they are so?*

To this I answer, that Miracles to some Persons and in some Circumstances

are proper means to beget assent ; for that they are not always convictive, appears from the Incredulity of the *Jews*, whom neither the frequent and stupendous Miracles of our Saviour, nor of his Apostles could perswade, but notwithstanding this powerful way of conviction, they put the Master to death as a Malefactor, and murder his Servants : I say therefore that to some Persons and in some circumstances, Miracles are proper means to beget Faith. 1. They are necessary means to them who have been constantly used and trained up by Miracles. Such were the *Jewes*, who received their Law in a miraculous manner, the Divinity of which was frequently afterwards attested by Miracles, and upon any great and notable defection of the People to Idolatry, God was pleased to reduce them by sending and enabling a Prophet to work Miracles. Now it is very unreasonable to think that the Gospel which should introduce and make so mighty a change in the Judaical Oeconomy should gain belief of them, unassisted of miraculous evidence and testimony, who were already in possession of a Law which God himself had

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so often owned and set his Seal to by Miracles and supernatural Operations. Hence it came to pass that the *Jews* demanded of Christ a sign, *Joh. 2. 18.* forasmuch as he called God his Father, and carried himself in the way of a Prophet, they require him to evidence this his Authority by some miraculous Actions, which our blessed Saviour both promises and fulfils by raising himself from the Dead. 2. Miracles do more powerfully strike the senses, and so are more apt to beget belief in them, who are not capable of a rational apprehension and dijudication of Truth. Hitherto we may refer Christ's upbraiding *Chorazin* and *Bethsaida*, *If the mighty works which were done in them, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes, that is, they would very probably have done so: for they lying under a great and inveterate Ignorance, and being so perfectly enslaved to sense, were more likely to have been rouzed out of their blockishness and stupidity by miracles which so forcibly strike the imagination, than by the most Rational Discourse to which they had so little vital congruity and agreeableness,*

Mat. 11. 21

Acts 17.

ableness. And it is very observable, that the Apostles never wrought a Miracle, but upon an urgent occasion and great necessity, where they found their Auditors capable and apprehensive: When the great Apostle of the Gentiles, *S. Paul*, came to *Athens*, a place long famous for all Polite Learning, he makes an excellent Metaphysical Discourse, and proves the Unnaturalness and Unreasonableness of Idolatry, by such Principles as were common to, and Universally received by the Intellectual nature of Man. And indeed a Rational conviction seems more clear and evident than a miraculous One, by how much the Innate Ideas and Dictates of the Understanding are more sure and constant, than the perplexed motions of a Versatile Imagination. And we find that the *Jews* evaded the force of our Saviour's Miracles, by saying they were done by the power of the Devil, and though *Lazarus* come to them from the Dead, yet they did not believe, but sought to murder him, and a perverse spirit will find various Artifices to elude the Assent which a Miracle commands from us. But now Humane Reason being in all Men one and the same,

same, it is more likely to prevail when advantageously propounded, from that antecedent suitableness and Harmony there is between it and all Truth. And without doubt our blessed Saviour himself seems to intimate, that the Assent which is extorted upon the working of Miracles, is much less generous and Noble, than that which is gained from the Understanding, by the Native evidence and beauty of Truth : *Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe ;* whereas the Facility of the Samaritanes is commended, who believed on Jesus upon his own Discourse, though he did no Miracle among them. And besides all this, Christ says expressly, that the very Nature and frame, the Sanctity and Majesty of the Doctrine he propounded, was alike sufficient to render the Jews inexcusable, as the unparallel'd Works he performed in their presence. *If I had not come and spoken to them, they had not had sin ; but now they have no cloak for their sin.* Again, *If I had not done amongst them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin.*

Wherefore to us who have Moses and the Prophets, the Discourses of our Blessed

Joh. 4. 18.

v. 42.

Joh 19. 22.
24.

Blessed Saviour, and the Writings of his Apostles transmitted, if we shall yet be incredulous, it is as likely and probable we shall still continue so, though one come to Us from the Dead. For,

1. We have already all things, pertaining to life and godliness, perspicuously delivered in the Holy Scriptures, and this Doctrine at the first delivery of it, was sufficiently confirmed and attested by Miracles and Supernatural Actions, the History of which is made as credible to us, as any Records of things can be, which we our selves were not Spectators of. Now, if we can believe any Histories of former Ages, any Records of Times past, we have the same Reason to believe the History of the Gospel, and he that sincerely credits that, will be as much confirmed in the Religion he professes, by those Miracles he finds long ago wrought, to evidence its Divine Authority, as if they were done now at this present before his eyes. *Blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed.*

Joh. 20. 29.

2. To desire new Miracles for the begetting of Faith, is to question the Wisdom of God in the Contrivance of the Gospel,

Gospel. For either the Scriptures are sufficiently confirmed and attested, by the Miracles wrought by Christ and his Apostles, to beget Faith and Credence in any unprejudiced and disinterested Person, or they are not. If they are, it is in vain to require the Reproduction of Miracles in its behalf. If they are not, we then call in question the wisdom of God, as if he either knew not the Natures and Constitutions of Men, or did not foresee what was sufficient to work belief in them.

3. The perpetuating Miracles for every Man's Conviction, would destroy and make useless their Rational Faculties. For the Christian Religion is a manifestation of the highest Reason that ever the World had any cognizance of, and all its Parts and Doctrines are every way fitted to Rational Capacities: But now Miracles being only Convictive to sense, if for the confirmation of every Article of Religion, there must be the concurrent Testimony of a Miracle, all Appeal to our Reason and Intellectual Faculties were useless and supervacaneous.

4. The Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the Dead, was a notable suffrage
and

Rom. 1.4.

and testimony of his Divine Mission. It is the highest instance of Divine Providence watching over and carefully superintending the Person of our Holy Lord and Master, which though it permitted Him to fall into the Hands of wicked and cruel Men, who bereaved him of his Innocent Life, yet forsook him not in Death and the Grave, but justified and approved the Design and Cause he managed in the World by dismantling those Infernal Prisons, and bringing Him up to life again. And this the Apostle takes as an eminent Declaration of the Divinity of *Jesus*, who though according to that mortal and frail state he took upon him in the World, became a Man of the Seed of *David*, yet in regard of that Spiritual and Celestial condition, which he obtained by the Resurrection from the Dead, was manifestly declared the glorious and powerful Son of God. For we cannot think that God would do so much for an Impostor, or that the Divine Power would so highly concern it self in raising him from the Dead, and thereby owning him in so singular and eminent a manner, if he had not spoken in his Name, and done all things by his authority and Commission.

S.A.

5. Another Instance of the Divine Approbation of the Doctrine of our Saviour, appears in sending down the Holy Ghost after his Ascension into Heaven. This Mission of the Holy Spirit, Christ promised his Disciples before he left the World, and signally performs it upon the Day of *Pentecost*. And this very thing is brought by the Author to the *Hebrews*, as an Indubitable Confirmation of the Gospel: *How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him: God also bearing them witness (approving and owning the Doctrine of his Son Jesus) both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will.* God is brought in here as a Witness to the Truth of the Gospel, and his Testimony is the Mission of the Holy Ghost, by whom the Apostles were enabled and furnished with divers gifts and miraculous Powers for the conviction of the World, that *Jesus* was the beloved Son of God and Saviour of Mankind. And this Redargution of the World was made a part of the Advocateship of the Holy

Ch. 2. 3, 4.

Holy Spirit by our Lord, *When he is*
 Joh. 16. 8, *come he will reprove the World of sin, be-*
 9, 10. *cause they believe not on me, that is, he*
 shall take upon him the defence of my
 cause, and convince the World of their
 great sin in slaying me a true Prophet,
 who came to declare the will of God
 unto them. *Of righteousness, because I*
go to my Father, and ye see me no more;
 that is, he should make it appear that I
 was just and innocent, though condem-
 ned as a Malefactor, and that I was own-
 ed and approved of God in that he vi-
 sibly took me up into Heaven. Which
 plentiful effusion of the Holy Spirit in
 such a wonderful manner, whenas he
 had been withdrawn from the *Jews* as
 to those extraordinary and Prophetical
 gifts for the space of four hundred years,
 was a Testimony clear as the Sun that
Jesus was the true *Messias*, the belo-
 ved Son of G O D, and therefore
 that they ought to have believed on
 Him.

6. Lastly, Christ was approved by the
 Spirit of Prophecy. Their want of un-
 derstanding and incredulity of the Pro-
 phetick Oracles, was that for which our
 Saviour upbraided his two Disciples,

O Fools and slow of heart to believe all that the Prophets have spoken. Whereby we are informed that the Prophets had long ago given, not only a character and description of the Person, but of the Doctrine, Death, Burial and Resurrection of the *Messiah*; and these Prophecies being so directly applicable to *Jesus* and to none else, it was an unquestionable proof that he was the true *Messiah*, and that the World ought to believe on him. This Argument *St. Peter* makes use of against the *Jewes*; *To him give all the Prophets witness.*—— *q.d.* If you believe not us the Apostles of *Jesus*, yet believe your own Prophets, who unanimously point out and refer to this *Jesus*, whom we preach to you. And thus *St. Paul* pleads for the Gospel, *Act. 26. 22.* that he taught no other things than those which the Prophets and *Moses* did say should come. By all these several ways, it is very apparent that God hath born witness to Christianity, and approved and owned the Person and Doctrine of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, which is the first thing required to the credibility of the Gospel, namely the Attestation of God himself.

Luk. 24. 25

Act. 10. 43

2. The Second is Rational Evidence and Conviction.

The most Noble Faculties of the Soul of Man are the Understanding and the Will, and that Religion bear a Rational Evidence and Conviction, it must be fitted with Arguments that must convince the Understanding, and perswade the Will to a due Reception and entertainment of it. Now the proper Object of the Understanding is *Truth*, from whence it follows that Christianity must be true that it may be believed. For the Truth of Religion, I shall refer to those Learned Authors, who have purposely handled that Argument, and brought as clear Evidence as the thing it self is capable of: And he that cannot believe without a Mathematical certainty, declares himself to be very absurd and disingenuous, and may upon the same grounds as well expect the same Demonstrative Evidence for the affairs of Humane life, or to prove the Truth of the Chronicles of the Kings of *England*, or *France*, that is, he is so strangely unreasonable, as to desire such proof, as the nature of the things will not bear, though in the mean time he have the highest evidence,

dence, and most unquestionable assurance of the Truth of Religion, that the thing it self is capable of, that is, a Moral certainty. For the Mind of Man may be as indubitably assured of the Truth of a Moral Proposition, as of a Mathematical or Physical one, although there be not the same way of Probation in all. As for Example, This is a self-evident Truth in Morals, and needs no other light, but that of its own to gain Assent; 'That in those things which we have not 'seen nor experienced our selves, we 'ought to believe them that say they 'have seen and experienced, provided 'they live up to their profession, and 'are not moved to it by secular respect. Which if it be not assented to, we must be Scepticks even in ordinary affairs and transactions of Humane life, we must not believe there is such a Place as *Constantinople*, nor credit any thing but our own Eyes and Ears, and say in a larger sense than ever the *Psalmist* did, that *all men are liars*. See more of this in Bishop *Wilkins* Principles of Natural Religion.

Now for the Will, that Religion may have a full and compleat entertainment

See Dr.
More's En-
chiridion
Ethicum.

in the Soul of Man, there must be something likewise to work upon that. Wherefore to make a thing eligible, it must have the appearance of *Good*, that is, it must have a suitability, congruity and harmony with the Intellectual Nature of Man, and a tendency to promote the perfection thereof; And such is the Christian Religion in its whole Frame and Contexture. For let us consider, who it is that owns, and has interested himself, as the Blessed Author of the Evangelical Oeconomy, even the Eternal *Logos* and Wisdom of God, that Almighty Mind which has closely contracted, and deeply seal'd upon all Intellectual Agents, that large and diffusive wisdom, that is seen in all the Parts of Heaven and Earth. And to think that Christianity should be in any of its Parts unreasonable, is to imagine this to be the only Unreasonable thing, that ever the Divine Wisdom was the Author of, and this alone of all his numerous Off-spring to be unlike the Father. The Gospel does in the most intimate manner derive it self from Christ the Eternal Son of God, and is especially owned and superintended by him, as being the repairing that work
which

which he alone made, and which he alone can rectifie: and to imagine that an Infinite Reason should propound any thing to us that were unreasonable, is as fond as to say that cold can flow from fire, or darkness positively ray from the bosome of light. Jesus Christ did not bring a Religion into the World, to perplex our minds and dazle our understandings, but for the real good and behoof of the lapsed Creation, to form our minds according to his own Image, and to regenerate our spirits into a living nature of Truth and Righteousness, which Design were utterly lost, if there were not in Christianity a perfect sympathy, congruity and agreeableness with our Intellectual Natures. Besides, let any Man but consider, how the Will is allured and solicited to Action, and he shall find, that it is then the most vigorously tempted forth, when something is propounded, which has a Natural suitability and harmony with those Constitutive Principles, of which we are made: but on the contrary, it is naturally averse to, and not at all concerned with that, to which it hath no vital sympathy or concord. Which is an evident

sign that Christianity is not only agreeable to, but perfective of our Rational Powers. What can be more agreeable to the true Nature of Man than Righteousness? What more suitable to his higher and Diviner Faculties than Truth and Goodness? These beautiful and glorious Forms shone bright in our Souls, before Vice and Sin had covered and overspread them, and forced our Minds into a Preternatural state. Now Christianity is design'd for the Recovery of Us to our Pristine Health and Rectitude, and tends to the enlargement of our better Powers, and the Recovery of them from that narrow and contracted state, sin and evil had brought them to. Vice and Wickedness are none of God's Creation, but are Obliquities and Aberrations from those Rules and Laws he implanted in us, and therefore as it is impossible the Soul should have any proper agreement with sin, because 'tis none of its Nature, so she must needs, on the other hand, sensibly embrace and acquiesce in the Principles and Precepts of Holiness, from that Vital Cognation they bear to her own Moral Being. There is no capacious and generous Mind, but

will

will find it self wonderfully affected and inamour'd with the loveliness of Christianity, there being nothing found, but Principles of the highest worth and nobility, and whatever else may speak true excellency and perfection. The Gospel is nothing, but God manifested in the Flesh, an eternal Mind clothed with the condescensions of Humane Nature, shewing us the Beauty and Pulchritude of that life, from which we had so foully apostatiz'd and degenerated, and confirming and re-establishing that Happy league, which was once between our Souls and Righteousness. By the tenor of which sacred Institute, we are obliged to great measures and degrees of Holiness, to Sobriety and Temperance, Chastity and purity, to be strict observers of the Rules of Justice and Equity, full of good nature and the desirable fruits of tenderness and compassion; in a word, we are enjoined no other things in Religion, than what the best and bravest spirits the World ever knew, have always accounted the flower and summity of Rational Natures. And do not all considering Men, find the greatest ease and satisfaction of Mind, in the exercise

of these things? And whence comes this Heavenly calm and serenity of Soul, but only from that gratefulness and symmetry, that is between such things and our Intellectual Man? so that the more earnestly we attend to them, the more fully are we transformed into their lovely Image and likeness. True Christianity is so far from debasing, that on the contrary it infinitely exalts them, by setting them at a true proportion to their proper Objects, and raising them to such a state, as all wise Men have ever acknowledged the highest Happiness and Perfection of the Soul of Man.

I have now shown the fitness and suitability of the Gospel, to the end for which it was designed, in that it is furnished with all those Arguments of Credibility, that may beget Assent in Rational Persons: but its aptness and accommodateness to that great purpose of Men's salvation, may further be demonstrated in that,

2. Secondly, It is so attemper'd to Humane Nature, that Men shall certainly believe, and yet no violence done to their Wills. For Men being Moral Agents, must be dealt withall according
to

to their Natural Powers and Faculties, and this makes the Method of saving Humane Souls by the Gospel, to be indeed a Work of Wisdom and Counsel, whereas if God should by his Omnipotency force them to a Belief and Obedience of it, it would not have been so much an effect of Wisdom, as of absolute and uncontrollable power. Now herein appears the Glory of Divine Wisdom, in the choice of such means and ways, as shall effectually bring to pass its end and purpose, and yet no violence and force offered to that Nature in whose behalf it acts. As therefore to assert, that there is no necessity of the assistance of the grace and spirit of God, in our progress in Virtue and Holiness, but that Men may be good by the strength of the Powers of Nature, is directly repugnant to the frame of Christianity, delineated in the Holy Scriptures, and the sense of the Universal Apostolick Church of Christ; so to think that the Operation of God's Spirit upon the Hearts of Men, is by an External Impetus and Force, is no less precarious and absurd, than the other is wicked and abominable. I shall therefore wave the first of these, as not being

being at all concerned with it, but directly supposing the contrary; and only discourse so far of the concurrence and energy of the Spirit of God upon the minds, will and affections of Men, as is evidently declared in the Holy Scriptures. And here I humbly conceive, that the Sacred Writings do no where declare the concurrence, or operation of the Spirit of God upon Men's Souls, to be by an Omnipotent Power at large, such as was shown in the Creation of the World, or Resurrection of the Dead, and which supposes us so altogether passive, as not to be in the least measure capable of promoting, or hindring our own good; for this were to destroy that noble faculty of Humane Souls their Will, and render all their Actions fatal and necessary: Whereas the Christian Religion was intended to heal and cement, to joyn and confirm the dislocated and disordered powers of our Souls, not to take them away, to perfect and compleat, not to extirpate and eradicate their very Nature and Being. No Man acknowledges the actions of Brutes or Engines, or the results of our Animal and irrational powers capable of Moral Good-

Goodness; because they act fatally and necessarily; and such would the actions of Mankind be, if they were produced by an irresistible Power. A power and assistance then it is certain God has given us, and that of his Holy Spirit under the Gospel, but the manner of his Operation is not absolute and unconditionate, but hypothetical, like the great conciliating and formative Principle of God in Nature, requiring certain terms and previous Dispositions and Qualifications, without which it is as vain to hope for the compleat efformation of Christ within us, as to expect the Rudiments of the Body of an Animal, to be formed out of a piece of Brals or Marble. For though we do not distrust the Power of God, but believe he is able to raise himself up Children out of the very stones of the Fields, and to change and alter the Natures of things as he pleases; yet since we find him framing and guiding them, not according to Will and Power alone, but according to the *Counsel of his Will*, we are likewise ascertain'd, that in the conducting Humane Souls to Heaven, God works suitably to their Natures and Capacities, and in such an

Eph. i. ii.

an orderly Way and congruous Method, as supposes the Presence of an Infinite Wisdome and Counsel in the Management of it. And this not only appears from the consideration of the frame of Humane Nature, which in its choicest part is wholly Intellectual, and therefore not to be forced by an outward violence, but moved and drawn (as the Scriptures speak) *with bands of love, and cords of a man*, that is, by Rational means and persuasive Arguments, whose force and strength must lye in their Congenerousness and sutableness with the Ancient Idea's and Inscriptions of Truth upon our Souls, but is likewise manifest,

1. From the resistibility of the Operations of the Spirit of God. And for a demonstrative and convictive Evidence of this, we need look no further than the preaching of the Son of God, while he conversed with the World and dwelt amongst us, who though he were the Essential wisdome of his Father, and his Discourses full of Life and Power, who himself was transcendently anointed with the Spirit of God, and able and willing to bestow the same, according as the needs and necessities of Men required, yet

yet *Jesus*, the Author and finisher of the
 salvation of Men, was not always succes-
 ful, but oft-times that precious and Im-
 mortal seed, which he sow'd, fell upon a
 Rock, and there were some that *rejected*
the Counsel of God against themselves,
 and *Many believed not on him,* and others
went back, and walked no more with him.
 Shall we say now that the Spirit of God
 did not accompany those excellent Ser-
 mons of Jesus Christ? If it did, his E-
 nergy and Operation was not Absolute
 and Unconditionate, since it was repulsed,
 and took no effect on many. Or is it
 not rather plain, that the cause lay in the
 stubbornness and obstinacy of their own
 wills, according as Christ himself tells
 the *Jews, I would, but ye would not?* A
 like form of Speech God uses to their
 rebellious Ancestors, *Because I have pur-*
ged thee, and thou wast not purged, that is,
 I have done my part towards it, but thou
 wouldst not do thine. Nor can I ima-
 gine, if the work of Men's Conversion
 depended so wholly upon the Power of
 God, that no precedent Qualifications
 were necessary to invite the Spirit of
 God to fall to work, why Men's obsti-
 nate incredulity should debar Christ from
 working

Luk. 7.30.

Joh. 12.37.

Joh. 6.66.

Mat. 23.37

Ezek. 24.

13.

vid. Isai.

65.12.

Mar. 6. 5, 6. working Miracles, as we find it did; or why he should not require a tractable frame of mind, as a precedent Qualification, for the exertion of his Almighty Power in the cure of spiritual, as well as corporal diseases. Nay, the Apostles and Disciples of our Saviour were so far from imagining an irresistible Power, accompanying the outward Word, that St. Stephen tells the Jews, *they did resist the Holy Ghost, even as their Fathers did.*

Act. 7. 51.

2. From those Arguments, the Spirit of God makes use of, under the Gospel, wherein Men are treated with according to their Rational Natures, and wrought off from Vice and sin, to a firm and permanent adhesion to Virtue, by kindness and love, by hopes and fears, by the inevitableness of impendent mischiefs, and by the security of future rewards. Which Oeconomy had been altogether supervacaneous, if God had engaged his Omnipotent Power to make Men good. Under the Gospel we are perswaded to Holiness and Righteousness, by the easiness, pleasantness and satisfaction of such a state, to which our minds being once arrived, they feel a full and entire Acquiescence

science and ineffable joy; a Pleasure re-
 sulting from the connaturality and agree-
 ableness of those Beautiful Forms, with
 the inmost sense of our own Souls. And
 because the dispositions of Mankind are
 various and different, some being incou-
 raged to Action, out of a Principle of
 Gratitude and innate Nobility; others
 not easily won, but by Advantage and In-
 terest; others again not without mena-
 ces of a severe and uneasie Discipline:
 therefore God in the Evangelical Dis-
 pensation, hath interwoven the most ef-
 fectual and cogent Arguments, to meet
 with each of these tempers in Men. To
 the first, he propounds the consideration
 of the Death and Passion of his only be-
 gotten Son, who being in the form of
 God, and dwelling in the Immortal
 Mansions of Light and Glory, yet out
 of that dear and ineffable love and com-
 passion, which he always bare to the race
 of Mankind, was content to banish him-
 self from those Blessed Regions, and put
 on our Servile Scheme, being born into
 the World a helpless Infant, subject to
 perpetual sorrows and afflictive circum-
 stances, leading an obscure and contem-
 ptable life, befriended of few, and at last
 dying

dying upon that uneasie Bed of sorrows, the Cross, that so his Death might be an Expiatory Sacrifice for the sins of the World. Which cannot but enravish every Ingenuous Breast, and fill it with the highest and most faithful love, to so kind and compassionate a Saviour. But there being almost as few of this sort of Men, as there were of old of those that embraced Virtue for it self, and esteemed it eligible, though divested of all appendant Rewards, therefore that Eternal Wisdome which has interess'd it self in the Frame and Conduct of the Gospel, propounds an advantageous Portion to the sincere and unblameable Professors of Piety and Holiness, and assures them that their labour shall not be in vain, but that their sorrows shall find refreshment, their hardships and difficult enterprizes, ease and pleasure, and their faithful Perseverance in Righteousness be recompenced with the Happiness of possessing glorified and Immortal Bodies in the highest Heavens. And if it shall happen, the minds of Men to be deaf to all the charms of Gratitude and Advantage, to the Allectives of good Nature and Interest, and there be no way

way left to awake them out of their stupidity, but by the Voice of Thunder, then Jesus Christ the Sovereign of Men and Angels, is represented to Us in Scripture, coming in the Clouds of Heaven, attended with Thousands of Angels, to take Vengeance on those that have not known God, nor obeyed his Laws and Commands: And by his Powerful Operation, the Seeds and Principles of Fire shall be excited, and that quick and Active Element insinuate and pervade all the Commissures and Parts of the Earth, and a Deluge of Flame, as once of Waters, shall overspread the Face of the World. Into which sulphureous and burning Lake, the Devil and his Angels, and all those who in this life delight in wickedness, and cast the fear of God behind their backs, shall be plunged to Eternal Ages.

These are the Arguments which are dispersed up and down, and urged in the Holy Scriptures, as so many ties and bands, to engage us to a faithful and peremptory prosecution of the indispensable Laws of Righteousness and Truth, and which as well in their own Nature, as in the manner and way of their Proposal,

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posals, do evidently declare that they are not fatal and necessary, but moral Instruments of propagating and diffusing the Life and Nature of God, and as all other Rational means of Perswasion, may by an obstinate and perverse spirit be slighted and contemned. And certainly the Nature of the thing it self requires it should be so; for if the whole conduct of Mens souls, in order to their salvation, were nothing but the effects and emanations of a peremptory and uncontrollable Power, there would be no place left for those large Encomiums of Wisdom in this great affair, Wisdom being *Inventrix Mediorum*, and then most of all discovers its excellency, in fixing and determining upon such ways, as shall operate effectually, and yet congruously and agreeably to the Nature of Men, Moral Agents requiring Moral Instruments, to allure and invite them to Action. But lest any Man should carelessly mistake me, and think that what I have said, tends to the invalidating and weakning our belief of the powerful Assistance of the Spirit of God, I do confidently affirm, *That no Man ought, or can attribute his beginning, progress*
and

and continuance in goodness, to his own solitary effort or powers, but to the benign and auspicious influence of the Divine grace and spirit. It is he that forms in us the Life and Nature of God, that makes us Holy, Righteous and Good, enlightning the Eyes of our Minds, that we may see the inestimable riches of the Gospel, and convinces us of the Truth of the Great Promises of Salvation. It is He that daily by a Vital Energy purges and refines the minds of Men from all filthiness and uncleanness, and consecrates their hearts as Holy Temples unto God. It is he that continually burns up and consumes our unruly lusts, and breathes upon the Sacred Life of God in our Souls, fanning it into a flame of love, that we dwell in God and God in Us. Through his mighty Power we are secured from our Spiritual Enemies, leading us with a Pillar of a Cloud by Day, and a light of Fire by Night, till he bring us to Heaven the true Land of *Canaan*. But in all this, the Divine Spirit does not pull and draw us like stocks and stones, nor offer any irresistible violence to our wills, nor must we expect that God should do all the work for us while

Phil. 2.
12, 13.

2 Cor. 6. 1.

1 Cor. 3. 9.

we sit still, but we must do it for our selves, only he has graciously promised to concur and lend us his hand and his assistance. *Work out your salvation* (says the Apostle) *with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you both to will and to do, ὑπὲρ τῆς ἐυδοκίας, of his good pleasure, or according to your desire, that is, God stands ready to help you with power and Ability to do it according to your desire, or as you desire it of him, and we are to take care that we actuate that Power, which of his gracious bounty he confers upon us. Which very thing makes us συνεργεῖν cooperate with God, as the Apostles are called θεῶν συνεργοὶ labourers together with God in the Dispensation of the Gospel.*

Having now discovered the Great Influence of the Divine Goodness and Wisdom in the Work of Man's Salvation, it remains likewise that I now shew, how the power of God has interested and concerned it self in the same: For the Apostle tells the *Corinthians*, that he Preached Christ to them, not only *the Wisdom*, but the *Power of God*. And again, *to them who are saved, the preaching of the Cross is the Power of God.*

Now

Now this Power manifested it self,
 1. In raising our Blessed Saviour from
 the Dead. Thus *St. Paul* says, that *Jesus*
was declared the Son of God with power,
by the Resurrection from the Dead, that is,
 God did own and publickly declare him
 to be his beloved Son, in that powerful
 manner of raising Him from the Dead.
 And again, he calls it *the mighty power of*
God which he wrought in Christ when he
raised him from the Dead. For when the
Jews had crucified our Saviour, the Cause
 of the Gospel, as to all Humane Appea-
 rance lay dead and buried with him as
 a lost and undone Cause, insomuch that
 the Disciples themselves were brought
 to this, *We trusted it had been he that*
should have redeemed Israel, so little
 hopes and expectations had they of a
 new state of things, when they saw their
 great Master dead upon the Cross. But
 suffering Virtue being so illustrious an
 object of the Divine Providence, God
 who owned and approved our Lord
Jesus all the time of his life, would not
 now suffer his Credit and Reputation to
 lye at stake being dead, and therefore
 notwithstanding the malice of the *Jews*,
 and the envious diligence of the spirits

Rom. i. 4.

Eph. i. 20.

of Darkness, asserts and maintains the Truth of his Mission, by bringing him up to life again. The impious care and industry of his Enemies, made the glory of our Saviour's Innocence so much the more clear and conspicuous : they look upon him as an Impostor, and having heard him afore speak of his Resurrection, they endeavour by all means to hinder it, that they might blast his Memory and bury his Honour with Disgrace ; therefore they roll a great Stone to the Mouth of the Sepulchre, sealing it, (probably with the Signet of *Pilate*) and setting a Band of Souldiers to watch about his Grave. But God that loved his Son *Jesus* to his Death, and took the care of Him when he was laid in the Grave, disappointed the hopes and expectations of the *Jews*, and made their malicious contrivances subservient Testimonies to the Truth of his Resurrection. A mighty Angel comes down from Heaven, at whose Presence and awful Majesty the Keepers trembled, and the Earth it self was moved, and rolls away the Stone and sits upon it, and the stupendious Power of the Divinity shakes the Territories of Night and slumber, and dismantles

dismantles the prisons of the Grave; and restores to our Saviour that Life the *Jews* bereaved him of, notwithstanding all their fraudulent Practices and Machinations. A palpable Indication of the mighty and efficacious Power of God, who alone can call the things that are not, and quicken and enliven the Dead, beyond all Humane Thoughts and Apprehensions.

2. The Power of God in the Gospel, has been very notable in the Destruction of the Devils Kingdom. When Mankind began to apostatize from God, and fall into Idolatry, he gave them over to the Tyranny and Dominion of the Prince of Darkness, as a just Punishment of their wilful Adhesion to his Counsels and Inspirations, and for Reasons reserved in the Depth and Abyss of Divine Providence, permitted all the World (save that he selected himself a Church out of the Posterity of *Abraham*) to be abused by the Devil, and to lye under that servitude and slavery, till the coming of Christ into the World. But when the Son of Righteousness was risen, the Nations of the Earth soon saw and walked in his light, and the Prediction of

our Blessed Saviour became verified and fulfilled in the Ruine of the Devils Kingdome, whose lapse and fall was like lightning from Heaven. For notwithstanding the mutual Combinations and Confederacies of the Kings and potentates of the Earth against the Lords anointed, and his Disciples and Followers, notwithstanding the furious Rage of Satan, in stirring up and raising many cruel and bloody Persecutions against the Church, yet the Word of God grew mightily and prevailed so far that the whole *Roman* Empire at last became Christian, whereby the Devil utterly lost his hold, his Oracles being silent, and his whole Worship destroyed. And surely had not the Christian Religion been of God, it could never have so Universally prevailed against such Potent opposition of Men and Devils. The hand and Power of God was visibly and eminently discovered in the ample Diffusion and high success of the Gospel, which from such weak and small Beginnings ran and was glorious, captivating the Minds of Men to the obedience of Christ's Laws, and bringing the World under the Scepter of his Kingdome. Which Destruction
of

of the Devils Rule and Dominion over Mankind, being in so great a measure already accomplished by the preaching of the Gospel, and that Powerful Assistance that attended it from Heaven, shall receive its full and final completion, when *the Mountain of the Lord's house is exalted upon the tops of the Mountains, and all Nations flow unto it*: that is, when both *Jews* and *Gentiles* shall unite themselves under the Banner of the crucified *Jesus*.

And now that I am discoursing of that signal overthrow of the Devil's Kingdom by Christianity, or the Gospel under the Powerful conduct of the Lord *Jesus*, whereby he became dispossessed of his Usurped Dominions, and those who had so long time been his Slaves and Vassals, returned to the Loyalty and Obedience they owed to their Natural Sovereign, I cannot forbear to insert a Conjecture of the Pious and Learned Mr. *Mede*, concerning the *American*, or New World. ' That those Countries
' were first Inhabited since our Saviour
' and his Apostles times, and not before;
' yea perhaps some Ages after: there be-
' ing no signs or foot-steps found amongst
' them, or any Monuments of older Ha-
bitation,

Lib. 4.
Epist. 43.

'bitation, as there is with us. That the
 'Devil being impatient of the sound of
 'the Gospel, and the Cross of Christ in
 'every part of this old World, so that
 'he could in no place be quiet for it, and
 'foreseeing that he was like at length to
 'lose all here, bethought himself to pro-
 'vide him of a Seed, over which he might
 'reign securely, and in a Place, *Ubi nec*
 '*Pelopidarum facta neq; nomen audiret.*
 'That accordingly he drew a Colony out
 'of some of those barbarous Nations,
 'dwelling upon the Northern Ocean,
 '(whither the sound of Christ had not
 'yet come) and promising them by some
 'Oracle to shew them a Country far bet-
 'ter than their own, (which he might
 'soon do) pleasant, large, where never
 'Man yet inhabited, he conducted them
 'over those Desert Lands and Islands
 '(which are many in that Sea) by the
 'way of the North into *America*; which
 'none would ever have gone, had they
 'not first been assured there was a pas-
 'sage that way into a more desirable
 'Country. Namely as when the World
 'Apostatized from the Worship of the
 'true God, God called *Abraham* out
 'of *Chaldee* into the Land of *Canaan*, of
 'him

' him to raise him a Seed to preserve a
 ' light unto his Name : So the Devil
 ' when he saw the World Apostatizing
 ' from him, laid the Foundations of a
 ' new Kingdome, by deducting this Colo-
 ' ny from the North into *America*, where
 ' since they have increased into an innu-
 ' merable Multitude. And where did
 ' the Devil reign more Absolutely and
 ' without Contrall, since Mankind fell
 ' first under his clutches ? And here it is
 ' to be noted, that the story of the *Mex-*
 ' *ican* Kingdome, (which was not found-
 ' ed above 400. Years before ours came
 ' thither) relates out of their own Me-
 ' morials and Traditions, that they came
 ' to that Place from the North, whence
 ' their God *Vitzliliputzli* led them, go-
 ' ing in an Ark before them : and after
 ' divers Years Travel, and many stations
 ' (like enough after some Generations)
 ' they came to a place which the sign he
 ' had given them at their first setting
 ' forth pointed out, where they were to
 ' finish their Travels, build themselves a
 ' City and their God a Temple ; which
 ' is the Place where *Mexico* was built.
 And though the Devil in those Quarters,
 and such other Parts of the World seem
 to

to Lord it alone over abused Mankind without any controll and opposition, yet the Son of God to whom the uttermost Parts of the Earth are promised for an Inheritance, will at length lay a Powerful claim to his own Possessions, and take out of the hands of his Grand Enemy, by the pure and uncorrupt Propagation of the Gospel, that Sovereignty which he exercises over those Desolate People. For as Christ in the Days of his Flesh by his Powerful and efficacious Word, commanded the Devils out of their usurped Habitations in the Bodies of Men, as a *Preludium* of that Universal Conquest he should hereafter obtain; so will he after such Periods of Divine Providence fixed and determined by his All-comprehensive Wisdom, go forth with his Legions of Light, and recover those wretched Mortals out of the Hands of the spirits of Darkness, by whom they have been captivated and seduced at their Will. Nor is this a bare Airy Notion or Fancy, but a thing to be hoped and prayed for upon very Rational Grounds, it being nothing but the enlargement of the Kingdome of Truth and Righteousness, and the Dissemination of that Holy
and

and Blessed Life of God, to which Mens Souls have a Natural Cognation, though for the present bent and forced out of their true state and Position.

3. The Power of God will Discover it self in a very eminent manner, in raising all Holy Men from the Dead, and rewarding their faithful services with Immortality and Life at the last Day.

The last enemy that shall be destroyed (says the Apostle) is Death: And when God shall think fit to put an end to the Generations of Men, and conclude the Scene of the affairs of this World, then shall the Holy Jesus descend from Heaven with a shout, with the Voice of the Archangel, and with the Trumpet of God, and the Dead shall be raised and presented each one in the Visible and Individual Personality they bare in this World, before the Judgment-Seat of Christ, to receive for the things done in their Bodies, whether good or bad: and they that have done good shall come forth to the Resurrection of life, and they that have done evil to the Resurrection of Damnation.

Which final sentence at the Conclusion of that dreadful Appearance shall be executed accordingly, the Wicked being plunged

Joh. 5.29.

plunged into the Lake of Fire and Brimstone, but the Righteous, through the gracious Bounty and stupendious Operation of their merciful Redeemer, shall be taken up into the Regions of Immortality and life, where their Corruptible Bodies shall put on Incorruption, and be transformed into the similitude of the Glorious Body of the Son of G O D, through that mighty Power whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself. And though, this Transcendent state and Portion may very well be thought too big for our humble Hopes and Expectations, and exceed all that we can do or suffer, yet since God is pleased of his Infinite Bounty to promise, we have no Reason to distrust his Faithfulness and Truth in the Performance of it, since he has moreover given us a palpable Pledge and Assurance of it in the Resurrection of our Blessed Saviour from the Dead, and because *he lives* we may be confident *we shall live also*. Christ is risen from the Grave, having conquered Death by dying, and is ascended into the pure and peaceable Habitations of Glory, therefore all his Members who are united to Him in the inseparable bands of Faith
and

and Love, shall feel the effects of his powerful Life in immortalizing their very Bodies, which shall then be absorpt into the Great *Vortex* of Eternity, where both Body and Soul shall be deckt with such a refulgent Light and Glory, as shall cause them to shine as the Sun and Stars for evermore. So that what the Poet fabulously speaks of the *Apotheosis* of *Daphnis*, shall much more be verified in the Translation of every good Man into the Kingdome of Heaven.

Candidus insuetum miratur limen

Olympi,

Sub pedibusq, videt nubes & sidera.

Daphnis.

Having thus far brought this Discourse towards an end, and displayed the Goodness, Wisdom and Power of God in the Gospel, the great Instrument of the blessedness of Mankind, it becomes our duty to receive it with the highest and most honourable thoughts and apprehensions; not to let our Conceptions dwindle into something low and mean, and unworthy of the Nature of God, who hath so intimately concerned himself in it. For
what-

whatever, whether Opinion or Practice, lessens that esteem and veneration Men ought to have of the Works of God, is a high Affront and Injury, and an Unworthy Derogation from the Perfections of the Divine Nature; whereas nothing shallow, trifling and contemptible can ever be a futable Object of Divine Goodness, Wisdome and Power: much less can there be any thing such in the Evangelical Oeconomy, which was designed for so great a Work and so Universal and general a Good, as the Immortal Happiness of Humane Souls. The very light of Reason it self teaches us, that we ought to speak worthily of God, and to have due and right Apprehensions of his Nature, the Excellency of which, though it were in a great measure stamped and ingraved upon the Minds of Men at their first Creation, yet is more clearly and sensibly discovered under the Gospel, than by any other Dispensation since the World began. And as we are to take care that our thoughts and expressions be agreeable and becoming so great a Mystery, so are we concerned vigorously to prosecute that which is the Grand Intent, scope and aim

aim of the Gospel, that is our progress and growth in Virtue and Holiness; to perfect our Minds in true Goodness, by a sincere Practice of all the indispensable Laws and Rules of Righteousness. For however Men may please themselves in expounding Christianity in an Opinionative and Notional way, in peculiar Phrases and Terms of Art, as if Religion were a thing deduced and borrowed from the Schools; yet certain it is, that the true Life of God, which our Holy Lord and Master Jesus Christ came to disseminate and propagate by the Gospel, is not a bare sound of Words, but an inward principle of Life and Power, elevating and raising the Souls of Men from all childish toys and follies, to a manly and generous Apprehension of Righteousness and Virtue, advancing their Rational to a compleat and entire command and superiority over their sensual and Animal Powers and Faculties, and begetting in them such a lively sense of whatever is absolutely good and holy, as may at last reduce their thoughts, words and actions into an

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entire conformity to the Divine Will. And forasmuch as this Heavenly Life consists in the sincere Prosecution and Practice of Virtue, and that Morality and Virtue are depressed beneath the concerns of Christianity, by those who pretend a more free Exaltation of Grace, as it will not be Impertinent to the present Discourse, so I am sure 'tis infinitely necessary for every Man to contribute his Pains, in stopping and damming up that Flood of Wick- edness and Immorality, that has broken in upon the World, by shewing the Indispensable Necessity of the Practice of Morality, that true Religion and Virtue are at no such Mortal Jarrs, but that whoever is false and Hypocritical, to the sincere and Con- scientious Practice of it, though he flie to Heaven in his vain Dreams and Imaginations, and talk of the Vi- sion of God, and an Immediate Com- munion and Converse with Him, yet he has neither seen nor known Him, and is so far from being a true Chri- stian, that he has very little of the Life of Christianity dwelling in him.

As I desire not therefore to charge any Man with the Evil Consequences of his Opinion, but charitably suppose that he holds fast to the Foundation, and whatever Tendency his Opinions may have in their Consecutions, that yet in their Primary Intention, he designs not the discountenancing of unfeigned Piety; so neither would I, nor can by any considering Person be upbraided, with setting and exalting Works above the Grace of God, as will appear, when I have a little explicated and unfolded those Termes, which have of late raised such hideous storms and Tragedies.

By [Virtue] therefore I mean that Power of the Soul, which so rules and governs all the Animal motions and inclinations, that she does every where, and in every thing constantly and unmoveably follow that which is best. As for the word [Grace] all the Notions of it in the Sacred Dialect (as a Learned Critick observes) Dr. Hammond. spring from that Primary Notion of it for *Charity* or *Liberality*. Wherefore

fore the Participation of the Divine Nature, being the highest Perfection and Accomplishment of the Soul of Man, and the ultimate end of Christianity it self, all those Acts which have a Natural Tendency to the furtherance and attainment of so high and glorious a purpose are stiled *Virtues*, they being nothing but the Powerful Exertions of the Soul in the subjugation of its Corporeal Passions, that it may with ease and constancy follow that which is simply Best : and *Graces*, because they are the free, undeserved and Gratuitous Donations of him, whose Almighty and Beneficent Spirit pervades the whole Order and Comprehension of Intellectual Agents, refining and purifying the Minds and Spirits of the lapsed Creation, and every where attempting the Replantation of that Beautiful Image, Sin and Vice had obliterated and defaced. Now for the Term [Moral] remaining to be explained, I conceive it may signifie, *Whatever contains in it an Eternal, Immutable and Indispensable Obligation.* By Eternal, Immu-
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table and Indispensable, I exclude from it all Temporary Constitutions and Positive Sanctions, though deriving their Authority from GOD Himself. I add *Obligation*, to difference Moral Truths from Speculative and Theoretical; for there may be many Physical and Mathematical Notions, which may properly be called *Eternal and Immutable Verities*, which yet lay no necessary Obligation upon Us. *That what is once moved will continue to move till something hinder it*, is alike an Eternal and Immutable Verity with this, *That every Man is to honour his Parents*, but the One layes a necessary Obligation upon the Soul, whereas the other does not. Wherefore though the subject of all Truths whatever, and so of Moral Ones, be the Perceptive and Intellectual Part of the Soul, yet the sole and Adequate Object of Morality seems to be the *Immutable Idea's and Reasons of Good and Evil*. And so far forth as the Soul exercises it self in the Discrimination of Moral Entities, it is called by the Name of Conscience. So that

the mistake seems to arise from hence, that Men distribute Humane Actions, in reference to Religion, into *Moral* and *Evangelical*, whereas Moral is not opposed to Evangelical, but to Thetical or Positive. But to give some further light to this business, we may consider these two things.

1. That the sincere Practice of Morality is a part of the Condition required of us under the Gospel, in order to our Justification. For unless the Practice of Moral Virtue be no part of the Divine Will revealed to Us in the Gospel, it must necessarily follow, that so far as it is made a Condition of the Covenant of the Gospel, so far it is required in order to the Justification and Acceptation of our Persons before God. For though we are said in Scripture to be justified by Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, yet we are not to understand by this, an empty, bare and naked Faith, but such a Faith as is perfected and consummated by Love, which the Apostle Saint James expresses by Works, that is,

is, such a Faith as is not meerly Notional and inactive, but productive in the Soul of a New and sincere Obedience. And what more frequent Instances does the Scripture bring of our Faithful Conformity to the Will of God, than in our Constant Exercise and practice of Moral Virtue? Insomuch that Saint *Paul* sayes, that those who neglect the sincere observance of Morality and Virtue, will easily be induced to turn Hereticks, 1 Tim. 1. 19 and deny the Faith, *Holding faith and a good conscience, which some having put away, concerning faith have made shipwrack.* So indispensably necessary is a Virtuous Conversation to our participation of the Blessed Life and Nature of GOD, that no Man can be understood to be a Partaker of the Divine Nature, who does not live soberly, righteously and godly in the World. For what sign does he give of a Spirit renewed and changed into the Compassionate Nature of the Lord Jesus, who can willingly pain and grieve and afflict his Brother? What *Specimen* does he produce of a
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sincere Conformity to the Eternal Laws of Justice and Righteousness, who can knowingly and wittingly over-reach and defraud his Neighbour? Or what Evidence does he offer of a Mind desirous to be renewed into a state of Angelical Purity and Holiness, who makes it his business and seeks for all Occasions to gratifie his Carnal Appetite in the full enjoyment of all Sensual Pleasures, that may be had without manifest Diseases? Or is it possible to conceive the Life and Nature of G O D, that Life of Universal Holiness and Purity, Justice and Goodness, without the Exercise of these and such like Virtues?

2. That the Maturity and Ripeness of Religion, consists in having a sensible Discernment of Good and Evil in a Moral sense. The full knowledge of the Mysteries of Christianity (as Heb. 5. 14. the Author to the *Hebrews* tells Us) *belongs to them that are of full age,* that is, such as are arrived to the Perfection and Maturity of Religion, and these Persons he describes in the
next

next words, to be such as have a Vital relish and sensible Discernment of good and evil, *who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.* That there are Natural Differences between good and evil, is as evident and apparent as the Difference between health and sickness : For as health is nothing but the right and Natural Constitution of all the Parts of the Body ; and Sickness the Oppression, Distortion and Deviation from it : So is it in the Soul of Man. Its true and proper Nature, is that healthful Temper and Constitution wherein God at first Created it : But now Sin and Evil is a forcing it into a Preternatural State, the driving it into a Disease and Distemper, and the putting its Powers and Faculties into Jarring and Discord. And that these Differences are nothing but the Vital relishes and sensations of the Soul of Man, in that double Capacity and Resolution of Rational and Animal, or in the Sacred Dialect of the $\delta \epsilon \iota \omega$ and $\delta \epsilon \xi \omega \alpha \nu \theta \rho \omega \pi \omicron \varsigma$ the inward and outward Man, or the
Flesh.

Flesh and Spirit, I think is as evident to any Considering and Judicious Person. Now this Maturity and Ripeness of Religion discovers it self, 1. In a particular knowledge of the Difference between Good and Evil, so as to be able to distinguish what is from the Flesh and Animal, and what from the Spirit and Rational Life. 2. In a ready Application of this to all the Passages of our Lives. For that *Blindness of mind* the Apostle speaks of, to which the Gentiles as a just Punishment of their former carelessness were given up, does fully express the Necessity of this Discriminative Sense and Discerning between Good and Evil. For when once the *Criterion*, or Perceptive Faculty has lost its Tenderness and Sensibility, and the Mind becomes *Reprobate*, then Darknes and Light, Good and Evil, Bitter and Sweet are all one. Then it is (as in the above mentioned place) Men are *dedolent* and *past feeling*, and having no other Law, but that of the Corporeal Life, become insatiable in Impiety, and *work Wickedness with*

Eph. 4. 18.

ἀσχημος
Rom. 1. 28

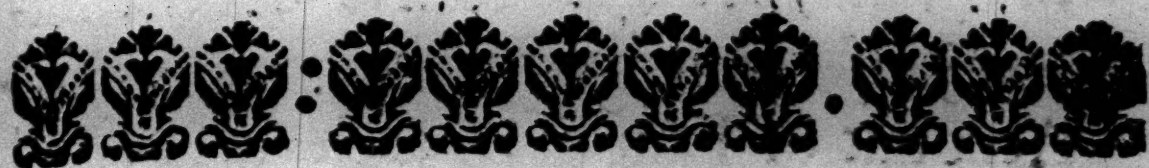
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Eph. 4. 19.

with greediness: which surely as it is the most deplorable condition the Soul of Man can fall into, so ought most carefully to be avoided by endeavouring after a particular Distinction, and clear knowledge of the Notices, Emanations and Suggestions of the Flesh and Spirit. And as this inward Sense is not to be stifled, so neither to remain useless and idle, but to extend it self and have an Influence upon all our Actions. It must be fanned and kept alive by sincere Devotion, and a constant and Habitual Practice of Virtue, by which at length it will become a Powerful and Vital Principle, begetting in us a true relish of Righteousness and Holiness, that we may not only talk and maintain an Artificial and Mechanical Religion consisting of Words, or the running the same Circle of outward Performances and Duties, but may be really regenerated and formed into a new Nature, and act out of choice, and from the innate Loveliness and Beautifulnes of Virtue. For by bringing our Actions to this Test and Rule, and applying them

them to the Natural Difference and Distinction of Good and Evil, it will keep us from all deliberate Violations of the Laws and Prescriptions of Holiness. By this, Wickedness and Sin will appear in its Natural Dress and Genuine Colours, and its Ugliness and Deformity be rendred so manifest, that our Wills and Affections will not easily be drawn into a Compliance with it, and the various Passages of our Lives freed and discharged from the least Appearance of Evil.

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